

TRISP KNOWLEDGE DEMAND AND ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP

Rural Roads Programme Meeting Office, Lima, Perú
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Proceedings

There were 12 participants including the facilitator. We introduced ourselves and found out that 9 of the participants were engineers.

LOCATION OF INFORMATION PROVIDERS

People worked in pairs to map information needs for decision-making and role of transport information providers in meeting them. Each participant reviewed a recent decision they had made that required them to look outside of their own knowledge and experiences. They listed sources of information that had been useful to them. Based on this exercise, a list of sources of information and frustrations as well as factors/principles that makes information appropriate to users' needs, and demand-driven, was drawn up.

Where they found information:

- People who are specialists (personal interviews)
- ILO (information services, internet)
- Personal library
- Internet
- Personal contacts
- INFOPLAN (CD-Rom)
- Ministries
- Information centre
- National Statistics and Information Institution (INEI or similar in other LA countries)
- World Bank (projects)
- Internet network on a specific issue
- Regional and local governments

Information they couldn't find:

- Statistical information on water transport at community level from the Amazon region
- Transport costs in the Amazon at micro level
- Map and bird view information
- Statistics on traffic
- Information on the situation of rural areas
- Information on rural roads
- Updated statistical information
- Adoquine roads
- Rural transport of different countries (except for information on roads)
- Rural roads, poverty and development (experience on the issue in the region)
- Indicators related to the issues.

Frustrations

- Information was found via internet and contacts but it took months to arrive by post
- It was not possible to download the information from the web site
- Information found was not reliable
- There were no people to contact for further information
- Secondary information is non-existent, for example, statistical projections based on census data
- Public information is not accessible
- Information on the internet is not always regularly updated

- Information could be accessible but costs are too high
- Even if the person who found the information was able to read it, it was not always possible to share it because the information was written in a foreign language
- They found the information on the World Bank web site but a key was necessary to access the information
- Information is hardly ever provided to consultants (for example, by civil servants)
- Information is out of date
- Information has not been processed
- Information is accessible via personal contacts in some organisations and institutions

How to make information useful

This list was revised after the SWOT exercise for the World Bank. We kept in this section the items that are the least relevant to the bank.

- Transport or thematic statistics and information should be made by the Ministry and made available to the public via internet.
- Information should be centralised by an entity. For example, information produced by the ministries could be centralised by the National Information and Statistics Institute, for example, via web links
- Census and annual surveys should include questions related to transport, as part of an information policy.

WORLD BANK INFORMATION PRODUCTS

Most of the participants said that they have heard about World Bank products but haven't actually used them much or not used them at all. It is clear to them that the information the World Bank provides is addressed to a certain group of users. Few participants have been to their web site.

They would consider it a resource, as a general reference for the production of a paper, for example. Among the reasons why they haven't use them much are:

- It is not easy to access them
- Language is often English
- It doesn't reach users
- Information they provide is too general, not very good for specific information
- Information is produced to usual users

Among World Bank information products that they know:

- Books: "Utilización intensiva de mano de obra"
- Reports on credit agreements
- Working papers
- Discussion papers
- Web site
- E-discussion (however, they haven't been able to participate in it, as it is for a closed group)
- Workshops, seminars

DFID INFORMATION PRODUCTS

Only four participants were familiar with DFID's information products. These were:

- newsletter
- books
- reports
- web site
- KAR research projects
- International studies

MAPPING WORLD BANK AND DFID INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

Although only half of the participants were familiar with these products, they were suggested to work in small groups by type of job affinity, i.e. consultants, researchers, government institutions and international organisations.

OVERVIEW OF PATTERNS EMERGING FROM MAPPING EXERCISE

Comments on the methodology

- Matrix displays patterns of access and usefulness, but doesn't reveal the reasons why the groups ranked each product as they did, and the assumptions made with each one;
- The ranking is relevant for these users only; they did not consider usefulness for the constituencies that they serve (e.g. communities, students that they teach, other civil servants working in Ministries): these user groups should be canvassed independently at another workshop;

General Comments

- World Bank information products are more widely known than DFID materials across all categories of user groups

World Bank Specific

- Participants who mapped World Bank information products agreed that books are hard to get but very useful.
- They find World Bank web site highly accessible but the usefulness of its contents varies between medium and high
- Workshops and seminars are of low or medium accessibility (it depends if one has contacts with the World Bank or with an organisation related to it) and people find them of medium or high usefulness.

DFID Specific

- Most of the information products known by the participants who rated them think that these products are medium or highly accessible.
- None found their information products of little use.

CONSULTANTS

WORLD BANK		USEFULNESS		
		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
ACCESSIBILITY	HIGH	Working papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Papers Web site 	
	MEDIUM		Email discussion	
	LOW	Discussion papers	Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Books Credit agreements Workshops, seminars, courses

INSTITUTIONS

WORLD BANK		USEFULNESS		
		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
ACCESSIBILITY	HIGH		Reports on agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web site Email discussion
	MEDIUM		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reports workshops, seminars 	
	LOW			books

RESEARCHERS

DFID / WORLD BANK		USEFULNESS		
		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
ACCESSIBILITY	HIGH	DFID Research projects	DFID Web site WORLD BANK Web site	DFID newsletter
	MEDIUM			WORLD BANK Reports
	LOW		WORLD BANK Workshops, seminars	WORLD BANK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> books Working Paper Discussion Paper

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

DFID		USEFULNESS		
		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
ACCESSIBILITY	HIGH		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newsletter Web Research projects International studies 	
	MEDIUM		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Books Reports 	
	LOW			

SWOT EXERCISE

Working in groups, all participants had the opportunity to add to each of the SWOT lists. After much discussion of some points, the following was agreed:

Strengths

- Money
- World reach
- Regular technical updates
- Leadership in generating information
- Political neutrality image at certain levels
- Contact and influence to access information at different levels
- Capacity to influence on national policy
- Wide information base
- Credibility at certain levels
- Good theoretical base
- Experience on infrastructure and development projects financing
- Prestige

Weaknesses

- Information is addressed to an elite group
- Presentation of information is not very practical for decision-making
- Overall information is not systemised
- Information is presented following marketing criteria but not users needs
- Users information needs are not detected
- There aren't conditions for regularly updating information
- Lack of adequate policies for acquiring and disseminating information
- Limited access to workshops and seminars for consultants and researchers
- Most of the information is in English
- Information on transport is mainly focused on Africa and on roads
- It gives the impression that transport and roads are synonyms
- No co-ordination between the different departments of the World Bank
- It is arrogant
- They are little flexible on their decisions on project development

Opportunities

- To carry out or finance studies in different countries in Latin America, in order to generate information in Spanish
- To influence on national information management policy
- To create conditions for editing information and information dissemination and carrying out information workshops
- To create thematic groups for feedback and replication
- Information generation
- To systemise similar information management from different countries.
- Greater dissemination capacity.
- To allow discussion and research of diverse issues (macroeconomics, poverty, and development) at different levels.
- To put aside resources to translate material into Spanish.

Threats

- Less resources for Latin America for documents, research and information
- Restricted funds for translation into Spanish
- Information is accessible but not used by potential users

- Reject policies developed by the World Bank.
- Increasing isolation and information production for an elite group
- Country thinking groups confront the World Bank and its policies.
- The WB is seen as a finance institution and not a development one
- Potomac syndrome (they become apart of the reality of Latin America)

Recommendations to DFID and World Bank

After the SWOT analysis, people reviewed the list of suggestions to make information useful (prepared earlier) and recommended above all, that both institutions have a clear information generation policy that includes:

1. Information should be in Spanish.
2. Generate and disseminate more information from and about Latin America
3. Disseminate information widely
4. Present information to meet users' needs. It should be practical. Users should be asked on how they want the information to be presented and how information should be generated.
5. Projects should include dissemination costs
6. Influence on national policies of information management
7. Terms of reference should be precise and demand an executive summary on each report.
8. Create an specialised search engine on transport
9. Put in place an acquisition information policy
10. Create a catalogue (annotated bibliography) by region and by theme, that includes key words, how to contact the author, where to get the document or book, etc and how to get a copy of it
11. Criteria for filtering information provided on the web should be revised (should be more inclusive).
12. Include more themes.
13. Create database of projects by regions and sources of financing
14. On-line World Bank training courses should be open to other persons and institutions that are not part of the World Bank.
15. Documents offered on the internet should be effectively accessible.
16. Open and extend the rural roads and infrastructure network to others interested.
17. Expand rural transport focus beyond roads infrastructure

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