



APFM Communication Strategy

DRAFT

1. Introduction

Integrated Flood Management (IFM) has been recognized as a critical component in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). Since its inception in 2001, the Associated Programme on Flood Management (APFM), which is integrated in the Hydrology and Water resources Programme of WMO, has been promoting the IFM concept. In 2009, the HelpDesk was launched as the primary user-interface and outreach platform of the Programme. In order to enlarge its resource and knowledge base, the HelpDesk is supported by an increasing number of Support Base Partners that bring their own expertise to the knowledge pool of the HelpDesk and the wider APFM. The HelpDesk has four main user interface features: A Help Yourself function aiming to providing access to publications and tools relevant to IFM, a bibliographic database, a virtual Discussion Forum and a potentially powerful GetHelp function that is being particularly supported by the Support Base Partners with the intention to provide essential guidance and assistance for users with specific needs primarily in the areas of IFM strategy, policy and capacity building.

The capacity component of the APFM has been particularly successful in providing trainings and workshops on IFM at regional and national levels, including Training of Trainers aimed at multiplying knowledge and the actual practical application of the IFM concept.

2. Knowledge Management in APFM

The promotion of Integrated Flood Management tools and practices is best undertaken within a Knowledge Management framework.

Major elements of knowledge management are already implicitly incorporated in the organizational setup and functionalities of the APFM and in particular in its HelpDesk:

- The building of a knowledge base;
- Processing of information and knowledge into publications and tools ready for dissemination;
- Ingestion of lessons learnt and best practices;
- Capacity building;
- Use of knowledge of experts in the Support Base Partners organizations
- Dissemination and sharing of information

In addition to using traditional means of communication in knowledge management, a future-oriented communication strategy needs to include Open-Source based means in the context of Knowledge Management. These may include products in support of

- E-learning platforms such as MOODLE
- Enterprise-Content-Management and Document Management solutions such as ALFRESCO and
- Innovative solutions based on Web-2.0 on the basis of Open Source. Examples are the development and use of Wikis as interaction between communities of practice (as in the APFM) or the use of Blog-Ware (such as ROLLER or WORDPRESS), and including FACEBOOK.

3. Formulation of a Communication Strategy

Communication is the primary transmission belt from knowledge-holders to users. It provides interconnections between knowledge holders that promote the dynamic growth of a highly decentralized and flexible knowledge base that is easily accessible to many users in many formats. An essential function of the HelpDesk is to make its services relevant and to increase and promote IFM through a multitude of communication channels. The challenge in this approach is to ensure quality control of the knowledge base and services provided through the HelpDesk.

Guiding element of the strategy is to optimize interaction between

- Potential users of the HelpDesk;
- Support Based Partners (and their networks);
- Alumni of past trainings and contacts established during the operation of the APFM and in particular its HelpDesk;
- Potential donors and financial partners for implementing the HelpDesk activities

A key strategic element in communication is its multilateral and diversified approach: Communication in this sense is NOT understood as a one-way road from information and knowledge holders to knowledge users and stakeholders but increasingly as a non-hierarchic interaction to share information and knowledge that is relevant for IFM. Therefore, it is intended to make use of social networks such as FACEBOOK that can be utilized as an important communication tool in diversified, dynamic knowledge and information management.

Another important element in the communication strategy is the outreach to public media. In particular this is aiming at promoting Integrated Flood Management and HelpDesk Services during IFM – workshops on national and regional levels (i.e. in river basin organizations) as well as covering the subject in the course of actual advisory services provided at river basin and especially at country level. This requires seeking active liaison with the media together with organizers of workshops, Support Base Partners and the APFM Technical Support Unit.

4. Objective of the Communication Strategy

The overall objective of the Communication Strategy is to

Establish and maintain efficient and effective means of communication to ensure quality-controlled ingestion of information in the APFM knowledge base and disseminate knowledge and information to a multitude of stakeholders and users.

Key expected outcomes as a result of the implementation of the Communication Strategy are

1 – Enhanced overall impact of the APFM at national, regional and community level

User engagement and feedback is essential in designing and delivering effective services related to IFM. The capacities available through the HelpDesk may not be known to a wide enough audience, therefore some countries or regions are not in a position to fully make use of the opportunities offered by the APFM

2 – Maximized opportunities of cooperation

APFM has proved to be an effective programme in terms of capacity building and strategy formulation in the field of IFM, acting as a hub for collection and dissemination of information on IFM. There is a need to further strengthen the network with SBPs and other partners in order to continue and increase this function of the APFM

3 – Improved knowledge base through past alumni

Sharing best practices leads to effective and efficient design and implementation of Integrated Flood Management strategies and plans. On this basis, alumni of past APFM trainings could provide useful experiences for the implementation of IFM to the local level; also, by networking and keeping contacts with the TSU past alumni could benefit of APFM and WMO support in carrying on implementation of IFM-related activities in their day-to-day work

4 – Increased outreach to obtain donor support

APFM is a joint initiative of WMO and GWP, funded mainly by external contributions (notably the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of Japan, the Federal Office of Environment of Switzerland, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy). Financial resources are sometimes a limitation in implementing strategies for IFM in requesting countries, and therefore donor support should be also sought for ad-hoc projects or activities.

These Outcomes are operationalized through a series of activities as outlined in the Action Plan below. Activities in the Action Plan are referenced to an assessment of current means of communication in the APFM as documented in the following paragraphs.

5 Current means of communication and dissemination of information and knowledge in the APF and the HelpDesk – a critical review

A substantive number of **publications** have been developed in the past phases of the APFM. Besides presenting specific topics related to IFM, these publications (namely the Concept Paper and the Policy Series) are helpful in presenting the Programme’s purposes and, through the Case studies, Project papers and Training materials (Lesson plans, Power points, etc.), the activities carried out by APFM.

Publications of the Flood Management Policy Series (Legal and Institutional Aspects of IFM, Social Aspects and Stakeholder Involvement in IFM, Environmental Aspects of IFM and Economic Aspects of IFM) in English were delivered to several universities and institutions with curriculum relevant to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) or Integrated Flood Management (IFM). The publications are also delivered to NGOs and government organizations. French version and Spanish version of publications were also dispatched to French and Spanish speaking countries. These publications are also distributed at international conferences or workshops.

APFM CDs including all APFM website contents are also regularly produced and distributed during international conferences or after specific training workshops.

The following table shows the number of countries, institutions, and hard copies dispatched for each publication since they were published.

	Number of countries	Number of institutions	Number of copies dispatched
Legal and Institutional Aspects of IFM (2006)	134	429	1,191
Social Aspects and Stakeholder Involvement in IFM (2006)	135	439	1,229

Environmental Aspects of IFM (2006)	134	455	1,315
Economic Aspects of IFM (2007)	37	61	438

A series of **outreach materials** (leaflets, brochures, folders) have been developed in the past years. However, these materials are in some cases outdated, and generally they do not contain any information about past achievements and possible products of the APFM.

While most of the dissemination highly depends on the internet, the promotion of APFM and the HelpDesk through brochures is also important. Since 2011 will be the 10th anniversary of APFM, a brief flyer or brochure should be prepared for the dissemination.

The **newsletter** list of distribution is effective and increasing, but it offers a one way only of communication (from APFM to subscribers). Moreover, there is a need to check the geographical distribution of the subscribers, to be sure that the newsletter is widely distributed. To cross link the HelpDesk with other WMO networks, it could be evaluated to include in the newsletter mailing list also the CHy networks, as well as the Regional Advisory Working Groups on Hydrology

There is a lack of **follow-up of past trainings**, and no feedback is received from trainees of past events (poor networking), leading to a lack of performance evaluation in the long term. A mailing list of alumni of training workshops has been recently developed to try to rectify this.

The **Support Base Partners** are essential for the success of the HelpDesk (Get Help), and could also be a good way to disseminate and promote the HelpDesk. This could also help to increase visibility for possible donors. The Advisory and Management Committees at their last meeting, urged the Support Base Partners to link their home pages to the HelpDesk, as per article 4 of the Letter of Engagement.

Along with the existing channel of WMO, **institutional collaboration** for further advocacy should be explored with Asian Development Bank and national water partnerships of GWP.

The Global Framework on Climate Services, which recognized the HelpDesk as a strong interface, might also work to open communication and support channels.

During the Phase I of APFM, the **APFM website** was established as the central access point for information on flood management in order to:

- promote the IFM concept;
- disseminate APFM activities in adopting IFM, such as field demonstration projects (i.e. pilot projects) and compilation of good practices and lessons learned from various regions of the world;
- provide for reference centre on flood management (i.e. a set of databases); etc.

The APFM website is continuously updated to meet these objectives. All publications and materials produced so far, information of latest events and flood management reference centre are made available on the website. Since the launch of APFM website in December 2004, the number of visitors has been steadily increasing.

Several peaks of hits have been observed after events such as international conferences and issue of new APFM newsletters. The steady rise in number of visitors is a clear indicator, that visitors tend to revisit the page, as otherwise the peaks around events would recede back to original values.

However, the **website** is not always sufficient for outreach purposes, in light of weak internet connections in certain countries, so it is important to build a communication and outreach strategy both through the internet and other means of communication. Moreover, some regions (e.g. Asia and the Pacific, with the exception of Japan, Korea and Australia) have very few accesses to the HelpDesk or APFM websites, probably because of limited APFM activities in the regions. It has been noted that there is a slight difference between the information contained in the website and the HelpDesk (e.g. past issues of the APFM newsletters are not available in any section of the HelpDesk). There is therefore a need to synchronize the two websites.

**COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
ACTION PLAN**

APFM Communication Strategy – Action Plan

September 16, 2010

Shortcomings	Approach	Action plan	Timeframe
Materials and contents			
Few materials are multilingual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English focused - Seek translation volunteer partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Start translation in other official UN languages (French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Chinese) - Consider translation in non-official UN languages with wide distribution (e.g. Swahili, Portuguese, Hindu) 	To be determined
Hard copy distribution is limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilize SBP network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SBP to act as « ambassadors » for APFM and the HelpDesk in relevant meetings, increasing the distribution list of the APFM materials to their network. 	To be determined
Introductory leaflets are outdated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revise and elaborate new materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reformulate supporting documents (e.g. brochures, leaflets) including successful activities and statistics (number of downloads, web hits, etc.) - Prepare a brochure of the 10th anniversary of APFM. - Create a portfolio to increase interest in donors for sponsoring specific activities (e.g. training courses, pilot projects, etc.) 	To be determined
Leaflets don't include achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reformulate supporting documents (e.g. brochures, leaflets) including successful activities and statistics (number of downloads, web hits, etc.) 	To be determined
Networking			
Newsletter lacks feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect comments in each issue - Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider establishing a “forum” (could be on the facebook account) or indicate an e-mail address to collect feedback 	To be determined
Newsletter recipients aren't clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reader Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess the available information in the databases - Publish a special issue of the newsletter with a survey to compensate/check the first assessment 	To be determined
Lack of training follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish alumni network - Communicate regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-establish contact with former trainees and assess the follow-up activities. - Identify reliable “focal points” at the country level and seek their assistance in increasing visibility at their country level. - Share the list shared with other SBPs' networks (e.g. GWP, CapNet). - Revive the existing APFM Facebook account. 	To be determined

Lack of training evaluation	- Mandatory evaluation	- Develop a long-term standard evaluation process for trainings (not limited to a performance indicator), including the follow-up activities and the communication strategy.	To be determined
Limited linkage between WMO and SBPs	- Introducing SBPs via newsletter and web - Vice versa	- Strengthen links with SBP to get information for the newsletter and for the HelpDesk (database, tools, etc.) - Strengthen contacts with SBPs's networks (e.g. GWP, CapNet)	To be determined
Outreach for new institutions isn't enough	- Targeting - Promotion by WMO	- Create a portfolio to increase interest in potential new SBPs - Create a portfolio to present to potential users of APFM services past achievements and available opportunities - Identify the institution in charge of flood management in the different countries through the network of UNDP, IFRC, DRR, JICA, SBP, and Hydrological Advisors.	To be determined
Website			
Poor web structure between HelpDesk and APFM	- Revise	- Synchronize information between the HelpDesk and APFM websites	To be determined
Limited linkage between WMO and SBPs	- Increase linkage	- Request SBPs to link their website with HelpDesk. - Request them to provide a list of key areas of assistance for publishing on HelpDesk website.	To be determined