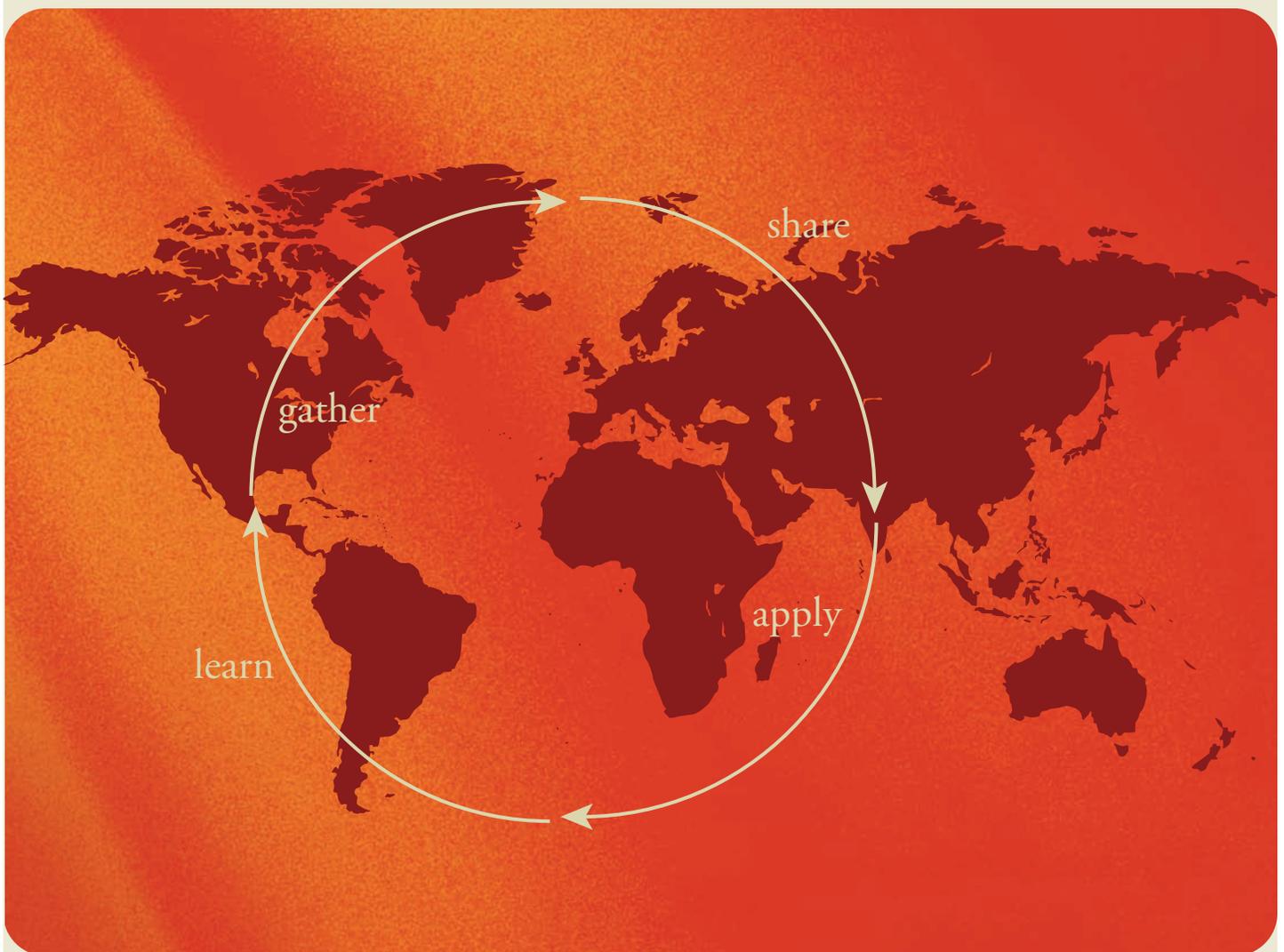


# Knowledge Management:

## A Guide for Local Government Associations



**FCM**

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Fédération canadienne des municipalités

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## Foreword

This guide has been developed to help build the knowledge management capacity of local government associations involved in FCM's international programs, as well as to support knowledge sharing on local governance more broadly around the world.

It has been adapted from *Knowledge Management: A Guide for Local Government Associations 2006* developed by FCM through the African Local Governance Program (ALGP). The ALGP supported local governance and the decentralization process in Africa from 2002-2007 and was funded by the Canadian Government.

ALGP implementing partners included national local government associations, and a select number of local authorities in four countries in Africa, as well as two regional technical assistance organizations and the continental body representing local authorities in Africa, the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA). National association partners included: the Association of Local Authorities of Tanzania (ALAT), the Association of Municipalities of Mali (AMM), the National Association of Municipalities of Mozambique (ANAMM), the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the Municipal Development Partnership (MDP - Eastern and Southern Africa), the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG), and Partenariat pour le développement municipal (PDM - West and Central Africa).

A main focus area of the program was to strengthen African networks and institutions working on local governance so they are better able to serve the needs of their constituencies. The ALGP therefore helped build the knowledge management and communications functions of ALGP implementing partner organizations. ALGP implementing partners developed the original knowledge management guide collaboratively and subsequently validated it at a knowledge management workshop for local government associations in Africa, held in Harare in March 2007.

FCM would like to thank ALGP partners who contributed to the concept and writing of the original guide, and Harare workshop participants, who made suggestions for amendments, many of which have been incorporated into the present version. Amendments have been made in consideration of the rich and practical experience of the participants in the Harare workshop, all of whom work directly for or provide capacity building support to local government associations in Africa.

Participants of the workshop included:

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Finally, FCM gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for this publication.

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## Introduction

### About this Guide

This guide aims to build the knowledge management (KM) capacities of national local government associations (LGAs), which have an essential role in managing and sharing knowledge related to local governance. Sub-national, regional and continental LGAs may also find it useful if they have responsibility for knowledge management.

In a context where the decentralization process is still a relatively new phenomenon but rapidly taking shape in the developing world, associations are becoming key institutions responsible for facilitating knowledge sharing among local authorities in their respective countries. They also have a central role in building regional and continental local governance networks in order to help move the decentralization process forward in their respective regions.

This guide is a tool that has been developed to assist LGAs in developing their knowledge management and communications functions or in strengthening existing ones.

The guide has been developed largely based on the practical experience of FCM and its African partners in conducting local governance-related KM in their own organizations. FCM has also drawn on the substantial body of knowledge on KM, available through the internet and other written sources. If you would like to pursue further research on KM theory and approaches, please consult the bibliography found at the back of the guide.

FCM places value on sharing knowledge more broadly than through its own international projects and programs, and hopes this tool will also be useful to non-partner associations and municipalities who wish to systematize their knowledge management function.

The guide is comprised of 3 modules:

### Module 1: Knowledge Management Basics

introduces the reader to the concept of knowledge management – what it is and why it is necessary.

### Module 2: Developing a KM Strategy

explains two approaches to developing a KM strategy. The first method involves a workshop approach, and the second involves bringing in a consultant or facilitator with expertise in knowledge management to work with the organization in developing an appropriate strategy.

### Module 3: Methods of Sharing Knowledge in Associations

provides a range of methods and tools to help promote and facilitate knowledge sharing in national local government associations.



# Module 1:

## Knowledge Management Basics

**In this module, you will learn about the concept of knowledge management. By the end of the module, you should have a general understanding of:**

- **what is knowledge management; and**
- **why knowledge management is important**

(Note that while reference is made to knowledge management in the context of a local government association (LGA), the same principles could be applied to a large local authority.)

### 1.1 What is Knowledge Management?

In the early 1990s, organizations of all kinds began to formalize the concept of knowledge management (KM). The practice of KM enables an organization (in this case, a national local government association) to systematize the way it creates, documents, shares and uses the knowledge developed through its processes and programs in order to achieve organizational objectives.

Knowledge management definitions vary from one organization to the next. In the context of an LGA, it may refer to:

The documentation, analysis, packaging, conservation and sharing of knowledge and experience with key stakeholders in order to achieve organizational goals and generate institutional change. An association's primary stakeholders include:

- its employees
- its municipal members, as well as non-member municipalities
- line ministries responsible for local government (most often found at provincial or national levels)
- district, provincial or central government political representatives
- academic institutions working on local government
- technical institutions building capacity of local governments
- regional or international local government associations that form part of a broader network

The type of content knowledge that associations manage relates mostly to policies and practices around local governance, management and service delivery, as well as decentralization processes. Associations also need to manage knowledge around its internal organizational policies and procedures.

*Adapted from the definition of knowledge management used in the African Local Governance Program 2002-2007*

Other examples of definitions include:

1) Knowledge management specifically focused on information technology may refer to: the process of capturing value, knowledge and understanding of corporate information, using IT systems, in order to maintain, re-use and re-deploy that knowledge.

*Source: OIC Document Management, as referenced on the Global Development Research Centre website, <http://www.gdrc.org/kmgmt/what-is-km.html>*

2) Knowledge Management for the purpose of an organization's internal use may refer to: the systematic process of finding, selecting, organizing, distilling and presenting information in a way that improves an employee's comprehension in a specific area of interest.

*Source: Knowledge Management Server, as referenced on the Global Development Research Centre website, <http://www.gdrc.org/kmgmt/what-is-km.html>*

As a process, knowledge management is comprised of four different stages:

- 1) Knowledge harnessing or gathering
- 2) Knowledge sharing
- 3) Knowledge implementation or application
- 4) Monitoring and evaluation of knowledge management activities

This process will repeat itself and improve as KM becomes institutionalized in the association.

### DEFINITION: WHAT EXACTLY IS KNOWLEDGE?

#### KNOWLEDGE IS IN HUMAN BEINGS... INFORMATION IS IN DOCUMENTS

– Themba Mhambi, United Cities and  
Local Governments – Africa

Knowledge is part of a hierarchy made up of data, information, and knowledge, where

- data refers to raw statistics and facts
- information is data that has been organized or categorized, and given context
- knowledge gives meaning and perspective to information, and is used to provide guidance for action

#### For example:

**Data:** the Association of Municipalities of Country X has 33 members

**Information:** The 33 members of the association are comprised of 5 cities, 10 medium sized towns and 18 rural districts. They have different priorities.

**Knowledge:** After its Annual Conference, the association's board directed it to determine the different needs of members. Based on a survey of members, the association determined that the policy priorities differ for the cities, medium-sized towns and rural districts. While cities are most concerned about generating revenue through property taxes to improve municipal infrastructure like roads and sanitation, the medium-sized towns need to ensure that they have access to a steady flow of electricity through the national utility. The priority for the rural districts is to increase the resources they receive from the national government to support programs for men and women at agricultural extension centres. The survey helped provide direction to the association, which then struck three sub-committees to deal with these separate policy issues.

### STAGE 1 Knowledge harnessing or gathering

Organizational knowledge is created by people through their daily work activities and general life experience. This knowledge can be retained by individuals by documenting the information on paper or in a computer system, or simply by remembering it.

A good deal of knowledge that individuals possess is called "tacit" knowledge. It is the knowledge that people carry in their minds that is rooted in their experience. It comprises people's viewpoints, beliefs and know-how, including practical crafts and skills. For example, knowing how to ride a bicycle is tacit knowledge that isn't documented on paper.

Often, people are not aware of the tacit knowledge they possess or how it can be valuable to others. This is because tacit knowledge is usually transmitted by personal experience, observation or practical training by an instructor or mentor. But this type of knowledge is valuable, because it provides insight about people, places, ideas, and experiences that can be useful to the association. Tacit knowledge has to be actively sought in order to be shared because it doesn't generally form part of the day-to-day business activities of the association. Providing a range of opportunities for staff to meet to share their experiences can help to draw out some of their tacit knowledge.

"Explicit" knowledge is knowledge that has been or can be articulated, codified, and stored in certain media, like databases, documents and reports, e-mail messages, images, presentations, etc. It is shared with a high degree of accuracy.

### EXAMPLE – TACIT AND EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE IN A NATIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION



The process that a local government association uses to organize an annual conference can quite easily be documented for future reference. This is explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge related to organizing a successful conference is equally important, but harder to document. For example, through his or her years of experience, the President of the Association likely knows how to network effectively with members, what sensitive political issues may arise and how to deal with them. This type of knowledge is equally important to share with colleagues in order to plan and run a successful conference, but will likely be shared in other ways, such as through informal conversations or meetings leading up to the event.

A first step in collecting knowledge effectively lies in deciding what knowledge is important for an association to help meet organizational objectives. While the knowledge needs of a particular association will vary according to its strategic objectives, some general examples are provided in Box 1.1

**BOX 1.1 – TYPICAL KNOWLEDGE NEEDS OF A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION** (note the list is not exhaustive and will vary by association)

- Administrative and operational procedures of the organization
- Project reports and documentation (finance and administration, correspondence, project files, policies, key contacts, etc.)
- Events management (processes, protocol for Annual Conference, etc.)
- Database of members
- Organizational policies and guidelines (communications and human resources policies, manuals for technology or other skills required in the work place, etc.)
- Communications materials or other knowledge products used to share knowledge with members, partners, other levels of government, etc.
- Communications guidelines and a communications strategy (see: Developing a Communications Strategy for a Local Government Association (LGA), VNG International, The Hague: Netherlands, 2004)
- Advocacy and networking contacts (e.g. central government bureaucrats and elected officials who have local governance and decentralization portfolios)
- Resource centre with relevant local governance related legislation and other documents related to local governance
- Media monitoring on issues relevant to the association and its members

**STAGE 2 Knowledge sharing**

Knowledge sharing is a very important aspect of KM, because when knowledge is shared and used, it enables progress to be made in a given area or field of expertise.

Knowledge sharing places value and importance on learning from the practices of colleagues and peers. It rests on the assumption that if we pool our individual knowledge and experience so that it becomes collective knowledge, we will be able to move forward more quickly and effectively in our work.

In fact, the practice of sharing knowledge to teach and learn from others has been going on for millennia, through both oral and written traditions. Africa in particular has a valuable tradition of oral knowledge exchange that still exists in many areas, especially in rural villages.

Module 3 describes some common methods and tools for knowledge sharing in local government associations and municipalities.

**STAGE 3 Knowledge implementation or application**

Once knowledge has been gathered and shared, it is possible to apply it in practice on an ongoing basis or in new situations, as appropriate. This is the stage in which progress is made and innovation takes place.

KM succeeds fully when it is woven into the fabric of an organization and becomes intrinsic to an organization's processes. It involves getting the *right information to the right people at the right time*, and helping people create and share knowledge and act in ways that will measurably improve individual and organizational performance.

An association's KM strategy will generally outline how the knowledge developed will be applied in the association. See Module 2: How to Develop a KM Strategy for your Association.

**STAGE  
4**

## Monitoring and evaluation of knowledge management activities

It is important to develop some indicators or measures to determine whether the association's KM activities are achieving the expected results. Based on the evaluation, you can then refine your activities or processes to make improvements.

Module 2: How to Develop a KM Strategy for your Association describes some basic ways of evaluating your association's KM activities.

### 1.2 Why is Knowledge Management Necessary in a Local Government Association?

In the context of local governance and decentralization in Africa and the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia, knowledge management is very important because of the relatively recent efforts of so many countries to decentralize and place more administrative control in the hands of local governments. More and more, local governments play a key role in delivering important community services including health, education, environmental management, water supply and infrastructure.

Local governments can benefit a great deal from sharing the experiences and lessons learned, both positive and negative, from the practices they have initiated, and by learning from others. This knowledge can help build self-reliance and allow them to better incorporate good governance models and practices in their own administrations, including participatory, transparent and accountable policy development, planning, resource mobilization, and management as well as the provision of accessible, equitable services for the community.

The main way that local governments participate in a local governance network that shares knowledge is through membership in their LGA.

National LGAs have a central role in managing and sharing knowledge among their members to help build their capacity and to better support them and represent their interests at the national level. The ability of LGAs to do this well is therefore a top priority that contributes to their relevance and organizational effectiveness.

In fact, the core business of an association has a lot to do with managing the knowledge needs of its members. Associations need to know:

- who their members and potential members are,
- what their priorities and advocacy needs are,
- what their technical assistance requirements are, and
- what types of knowledge their members need

National associations are also an important hub of knowledge about decentralization and local governance that can be shared in their regions and globally. They have much to contribute to and learn from sister organizations, and this knowledge can in turn be shared with members.

#### BOX 1.2 – BENEFITS OF KM TO THE ASSOCIATION

The Executive Director of the National Association of Municipalities of Country X would like to develop a knowledge management strategy for her organization. Yet her board members are wondering what the value is in spending time and resources on KM. She explains that the members will benefit for many reasons:

- it will foster communication and dialogue with important stakeholders;
- it will help prioritize and facilitate documentation of key local governance, management and service delivery issues that affect members;
- it will help enable members and other stakeholders to learn from each other and build their own capacity in the process;
- it will strengthen the association's presence in broader local governance networks, and enable members to connect with these networks; and
- it will improve organizational effectiveness as it becomes integrated in the association's business processes.

After reflecting on the benefits, the board agrees that KM should be a top priority and advises the Executive Director to embark on developing a strategy.

### BOX 1.3 – SETTING UP A KM FUNCTION IN YOUR ASSOCIATION

When an association begins to set up a formal KM function (either a unit, or a process for staff to do KM), it will likely go through the following “life cycle”:

#### 1) **Decide to support KM and get the process started**

Once an association decides to support KM, it will likely need to allocate time and resources to KM. The association may wish to hire a consultant with expertise in knowledge management to advise and guide the process.

#### 2) **Develop a Strategy**

In order to launch a KM initiative in the association, it is well advised for an association to have a strategy to set objectives and prioritize activities according to available resources. Module 2 explains a couple of approaches to developing a KM strategy for the association.

#### 3) **Launch a KM initiative**

Using its strategy as the basis, the association will follow its KM work plan to launch a KM initiative. It may be useful to start with a pilot project or activity to discover what works and what doesn't, and to refine the approach before implementing a larger strategy across the whole association. For the initiative to be successful, staff needs to feel the benefits of their participation and have the requisite skills and resources to meet objectives.

#### 4) **Expand and support KM**

Once the association has launched and evaluated smaller scale KM initiatives, it will be ready to expand and support KM in an effort to implement the wider strategy.

#### 5) **Institutionalize KM**

Once the association has had the experience of implementing its first KM strategy and learning from the process, it will be well on its way to institutionalizing KM. The strategy should be seen as a “living” document that changes as the association grows, learns and changes.

Module 2 focuses on how to develop a KM Strategy for your association. Before proceeding to Module 2, you and/or your colleagues may wish to complete Exercise 1, which will assess your understanding of the concepts introduced in this module, and allow you to think about how they relate to your own organization.

## Exercise 1: Assess your understanding of KM concepts introduced in Module 1

The following questions will help you and others in your association to assess your understanding of the KM concepts introduced in module 1.

### Suggested process:

Take some time to answer the questions individually. Follow this up with a facilitated group discussion, during which participants are encouraged to share their answers. The facilitator can guide the group to help build a consensus around the answers.

By the end of the discussion, participants should have a common understanding of the concepts introduced in Module 1, as well as some insight on what knowledge management means to your association. Some of the information generated during this exercise may be referred to in Module 2.

1) What is knowledge management, generally speaking?

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2) Why do you think it might be important for your association? What benefits would it bring to the association?

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3) What are the four stages of knowledge management?

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4) What is the difference between tacit and explicit knowledge? Provide examples of tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge you possess related to the work of the association.

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5) What are some ways you could share your tacit knowledge with others in the association?

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6) What are some other examples of tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge you possess in your own life?

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7) What type of knowledge is most important for you in order to do your job effectively?

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8) What do you think is the most important type of knowledge for the association as a whole to achieve its objectives, taking into consideration its particular role in managing decentralization processes and supporting its local government members?

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# Module 2:

## How to Develop a KM Strategy for Your Association

This module describes two ways that a local government association can develop a KM Strategy. The first method involves a workshop approach, and the second involves bringing in a consultant or facilitator with expertise in knowledge management to work with the organization in developing an appropriate strategy.

By the end of the module, participants should be able to:

- understand what a KM strategy is
- define the knowledge needs of the association
- outline the main elements of the association's KM strategy
- develop an action plan on KM for the association
- outline how the association will measure the success of the KM initiative

### Method 1: Conducting a workshop to develop a KM strategy

Because every employee of a local government association has an important role to play in managing and sharing knowledge, it is recommended that a broad cross-section of staff from the association participate in the workshop to develop a KM strategy for the association. The process would likely also benefit from involving members of the Board of the association. If the association has less than 10 or 15 staff, you may wish to hold a full staff retreat.

Ideally, the association should designate at least one full day to this planning process. Experience has shown that organizations may benefit from a longer process of up to 2 days in order to gain the most from the process. Estimated time requirements for each step are indicated.

**Suggested process:** *Identify a facilitator and a rapporteur for the workshop*

If the association is newly established and in the process of building its general operational capacity, it is recommended that an external facilitator with expertise in knowledge management is brought in to guide the process. The facilitator should review the material in this module prior to the workshop, and guide participants through each step. Section 3.1 in Module 3 provides some tips on how to facilitate a meeting.

#### STEP 1

### Determine the context for knowledge management in your association

*Time required: 60 minutes*

The facilitator should review the concepts introduced in Module 1 with the group and guide participants through Exercise 1, Module 1. This will enable participants to establish a shared understanding of the general concept of KM and why it is an important function for the association, given its own context. Participants may refer to answers to questions 7 and 8 when conducting Steps 2 – 5 in Module 2.

## STEP 2

### Develop a general understanding of a KM strategy

*Time required: at least 30 minutes, but up to 60 minutes may be required*

Participants should read the section below, or the facilitator may present the content below, which will familiarize them with the concept of a KM strategy.

#### What is a KM Strategy?

A KM strategy is a plan that describes how an association will manage its knowledge better for the benefit of the association, its members and other stakeholders. Knowledge management is an important aspect of what local government associations do, even if the term itself is new and not yet regularly used.



#### DEFINITION: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A STRATEGY AND A PLAN?

Sometimes there is confusion over the difference between a strategy and a plan. Some see a plan as a lower level working document than a strategy. For the purposes of this guide, we consider a strategy to be a comprehensive plan of action that identifies critical direction, activities and allocation of resources, which is consciously adapted and monitored to improve organizational performance. We use the term KM strategy to refer to the entire process around developing and evaluating a KM action plan for the association. The written product that results from this process is the KM action plan.

*An example of a KM Strategy for a local government association can be found in Appendix 1.*

## STEP 3

### Conduct a KM Audit

A KM audit will help the association identify the strategic objectives of the association that should be considered in the KM strategy, and identify the knowledge it needs to help meet these objectives. Box 2.1 describes a knowledge audit in more detail.

*Time required: 2 to 4 hours*

The facilitator will guide participants through this exercise. The rapporteur should take notes on flip chart paper during the discussion and post them around the room, to enable the entire group to refer back to them. A white board, a chalk board or a computer with an LCD projector can also be used, depending on the resources available. The important point is that all participants should be able to see the notes during the exercise.

#### BOX 2.1 – WHAT IS A KNOWLEDGE AUDIT:

One way to assess the current situation is through what is called a knowledge audit, which provides an evidence-based assessment of where the association needs to focus its knowledge management efforts.

Your staff group could consider the following questions in your audit:

- What are the association's knowledge needs?
- What knowledge assets or resources do we have and where are they?
- What gaps exist in our knowledge?
- How does knowledge flow around the association?
- What blockages are there to that flow?

A knowledge audit can reveal the association's knowledge management needs, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and risks. It is very important to involve a good cross-section of staff of the association in this process, because each role has a different set of knowledge needs that are important for that function. By working with key staff groups, the extent to which the needs vary across the organization can be identified, and the KM strategy developed accordingly.

In some cases, it may be useful to include the board in such an exercise. This will enable the board to take ownership of the importance of creating and sharing knowledge, and will also assist the board in understanding the operational needs and realities of the association.

**Please note:** If your association has a strategic plan or an annual work plan, it would be useful to refer to these plans at this stage of the assessment.<sup>1</sup> Whether or not a strategic plan exists, the KM strategy will likely be an integral part of the strategic plan of the association.

#### 1) Identify strategic objectives

Knowledge management initiatives, like all projects, are more likely to succeed when they have a clearly defined scope and objectives. Ask participants to identify the following:

- 1) What is the most significant strategic objective of the association in the near future? (E.g. to expand membership? to

<sup>1</sup> For more information about strategic planning, see *A Handbook on Strategic Planning for Local Authorities in Africa*, Municipal Development Partnership, Harare: 2006.

achieve a particular policy objective? to provide training to newly elected local officials?)

- 2) What are the association's other main objectives?
- 3) Once the group has come to a consensus around the 5 or 6 most important objectives of the association, note them in order of priority on flip chart paper and post them on the walls in the meeting room.

When setting priorities it's always important to keep in mind the human and financial resources available to the association. The ultimate vision of the association may not match what can be realistically implemented in the near future. It may be useful to map out the priorities, while noting which may need to be postponed until additional resources can be secured.

## 2) Determine what knowledge is needed to meet the association's objectives

Participants should now assess how well the association is performing against the objectives they just identified. They will need to consider the various staff functions in the association and look at factors that influence each in reaching their objectives.

**Note on process:** Depending on the number of objectives your association has identified and the number of participants in this module, this step can be done in a number of small groups, or in one large group. If you have more than three objectives, you may wish to break the group up and allocate 2 or 3 objectives to each group. Once each group has completed questions 1 through 3 below, the large group may re-convene and share their results.

You may wish to refer to your answers to questions 7 and 8 in Exercise 1, Module 1.

- 1) Identify which knowledge areas are significant to help achieve each objective. Knowledge areas may range from project management expertise, to policy expertise, to event coordination, to communications or information management expertise. For each objective, summarize the key issues and knowledge needs of the association and its stakeholders (e.g. staff, members, central government stakeholders, sister organizations, international networks).

- 2) Highlight the existing knowledge management activities and experience of the association that relate to the knowledge needs you just identified.
- 3) How could the current KM activities be improved? Outline the benefits and how they can be built upon, as well as possible barriers to further progress. Consider how people, organizational processes and technology currently support or hamper knowledge management in the association, as well as how knowledge is documented, structured or shared in some other way.

At this stage of the analysis, the group (or groups) are effectively creating a wish list of the KM activities they feel will improve organizational performance to help achieve the association's strategic objectives.

Note that some activities will require people, some will require processes or systems to be used, and others may require the use of technology, like websites, databases or email. Most KM strategies involve activities that focus on sharing both tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. This means that some activities will focus on connecting people with information (to share explicit knowledge), and others will focus on connecting people with people (to share tacit knowledge).

Some examples include:

- Building and managing a database of member contacts, which includes a way of tracking which staff are working with which members on which issues
- Creating templates and a protocol for sending information to members (e.g. communiqués, press releases, surveys, etc.), in order to ensure that a common process is used and time saved
- Producing an association newsletter, and developing and managing a mailing list (email or regular post) for it
- Setting up a committee structure so that information can be shared regularly among staff across various functions or departments in the organization

In the next step, participants will be asked to develop an action plan based on the information generated.

**STEP  
4****Develop a KM action plan  
for the association**

*Time required: 2-4 hours*

Sometimes an action plan for knowledge management is called a “KM solution”. Your solution should include the specific actions or activities that will be done to support knowledge management.

**1) Prepare a realistic work plan for  
knowledge management**

In a group, review the knowledge needs/activities you identified in Step 3. Consider which areas are likely to have the most impact on organizational performance. Consider who should be responsible for the various activities, and the level of resources and technology that would be required. When developing your solution, consider the following:

- Does the association have tools that may be adapted or further developed?
- What can the association get or buy from external providers (suppliers, consultants, partners or donor organizations)
- Are there alternative solutions?
- What are the costs?

**TIP**

For associations that are new to formalizing the concept of knowledge management, it is important to begin slowly by choosing a few core activities that can make a difference. Most of the time, knowledge management initiatives are actually taking place in an organization before there is a strategy. The strategy should reflect the organization’s realities, be practical and written in the language of the organization. For the strategy to be successful, it is important for staff to feel the benefits of their participation from the outset.

Try a pilot project or activity before finalizing and implementing the KM strategy. This will allow you to find out what works and what doesn’t, and to refine your approach and ‘get it right’ before implementing a larger strategy across the whole association.

**EXAMPLE – PREPARING A REALISTIC  
PLAN IN A NEWLY FORMED  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
ASSOCIATION**

A newly formed local government association in country x has two staff – the Executive Director and an Executive Assistant. The Executive Director has been tasked with developing the operational capacity of the association and building relationships with the 20 member municipalities that participated in its establishment. The Executive Director is also a key liaison with the national government and other stakeholders involved in local governance in the country. The Executive Assistant is responsible for providing support to the Executive Director in tasks such as correspondence with members and other stakeholders, scheduling meetings, basic financial administration, and developing and disseminating communications materials.

For the time being, members have accepted that the resources available to the association will allow for staff salaries and office administration, association management training for the two staff, one annual conference that will bring members together to discuss policy issues and share knowledge, and a small budget for communications activities.

The KM activities that the association decided to prioritize were the following:

- To develop a member contact list, and a contact list of other key stakeholders;
- To develop a quarterly newsletter to be distributed to members and contacts, with relevant news related to the work of the association;
- To set up an organizing committee among the membership to aid in planning and organizing the Annual Conference;
- To prepare a number of policy briefs in consultation with the board and circulate them to Members

## 2) Develop an evaluation plan

*Time required: 60 – 90 minutes*

How will you measure the effectiveness of your work plan?

It is important to develop some indicators or measures to determine whether the activities in your plan are achieving the expected results. Based on the evaluation, you can then refine your strategy to make improvements.

At this stage of analysis, participants may help to develop performance measures for their KM solution. Through a facilitated discussion, ask the group to reflect on each activity in the KM solution. For each activity, ask the group what indicators might be used to measure the success of the initiative.

In addition, since the KM solution is tied to the associations' strategic objectives, you can also make use of measurement systems already in place – you may be able to assume that improvements in these measures indicate that the KM initiatives are having an impact. See Box 2.3 for further insight on how to measure the success of KM.



### TIP

Focus on what is important – measure only the outcomes for which you can be confident that an action or decision can be taken as a result of the measure.

## 3) Identify risks to the association to implementing the plan

Ask the group to identify the potential risks to implementing the plan.

Some common factors that may affect the success of KM initiatives include:

- Sustainability of funding: if dependent on funding from donor agencies, associations may lose funding for KM when specific projects or programs end;
- Lack of buy in from staff and members: KM initiatives need to be clearly defined and understood by staff;
- Absence of a champion in the organization: someone in a leadership position should emphasize the importance of KM and support KM initiatives;

- Fear of sharing knowledge: in some cases associations or their employees may feel that sharing knowledge makes them vulnerable; and
- Insufficient staff capacity to properly implement KM initiatives

These risks should be assessed and the final plan should address them and attempt to minimize them.

### BOX 2.3 – HOW DO YOU MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT?

There is no common consensus around how best to measure the success of knowledge management. Ideally, knowledge management activities are intertwined with organizational processes and activities, so it is difficult to determine whether the success of a particular initiative is specifically related to KM.

One way to ascertain how well the association is performing on KM is to use the same measures that assess organizational performance. By measuring outcomes related to the strategic objectives, or by measuring the success of a particular process or project, it may be possible to use these measures as a proxy measure for the success of the KM component. However, in this case it may not be clear whether success is directly related to KM.

Another way to measure progress vis a vis KM is to go back to the initial KM audit work you completed in Step 3, and analyze whether change has occurred regarding the answers to the questions around knowledge gaps and needs. Determine whether these gaps have been addressed, and how. Determine whether there have been any positive changes in organizational performance as a result.

**STEP  
5****Write up your KM Action Plan**

Based on the information generated in Steps 1 through 4, you should be ready to write up your KM action plan. Someone should be designated to take on this responsibility following the workshop. When completed, participants may review the content to ensure that it is consistent with the outcomes of the workshop.

The strategy should be endorsed and possibly even overseen by senior management. KM initiatives need support from senior management in order to be successful.

Note that a KM action plan can be seen as a working document. The needs of the association will likely change over time, and the strategy will have to be changed accordingly. Similarly, the strategy may change as various KM initiatives are evaluated.

**Appendix 1** provides an example of a Knowledge Management Strategy developed by the National Municipal League of Thailand in December 2006. NMLT used the workshop approach in this guide as the basis for the strategy.

A KM action plan can also be useful for an association's individual projects or programs, when there is a need to develop and share knowledge broadly both internally and with external partners or stakeholders. For example, partners in FCM's African Local Governance Program developed a KM strategy collaboratively for the program, which would help guide the process of knowledge management in the program.

ALGP partners recognized that through the program, the partner associations and municipalities involved would develop a great deal of knowledge and lessons learned related to local governance and the decentralization process. There would be tremendous opportunity to document and share these innovations and lessons more broadly in participating countries as well as throughout Africa and other parts of the world. In addition, there would be occasions in which partners would work together to develop knowledge, and they would need to establish clear methods of communication and ways of working together. Knowledge management therefore became an integral component in the design of the ALGP.

In order to build a common understanding of what knowledge management meant in the program, partners developed a working definition of knowledge management that fit with the program's goal and objectives. A copy of the ALGP Knowledge Management and Communication Strategy is available in **Appendix 2**.

**Method 2:  
Developing a KM Strategy with  
a Consultant or Advisor**

Associations with very few staff or that are new to the concept of knowledge management may wish to hire a consultant or advisor who can work with them to develop a KM Strategy that is both realistic and strategic. A consultant with experience in knowledge management or corporate communications would likely be the best candidate for the assignment. He or she will likely work with senior management and staff, and perhaps the board, in developing the strategy.

The consultant should be able to help associations with limited resources select initiatives that make sense and reflect organizational priorities. The important point to remember about using this approach is that for knowledge management to be effective, all staff must participate in the process and feel comfortable with the solution that is developed.

Another reason why an association may wish to bring in an external consultant or advisor is to gain a fresh perspective on its strengths and weaknesses in managing and sharing knowledge. Consultants may ask important questions that would not have been considered by staff or others who are very close to the organization.

**Next Steps**

Now that your association has a KM strategy with an action plan, you are ready to begin your KM initiative. Knowledge sharing with key stakeholders will likely be an important part of your plan. The next module focuses on some important tools you can use to share knowledge effectively.

# Module 3:

## Methods of Knowledge Sharing in Associations

**This module focuses on one important element of knowledge management – knowledge sharing.**

National local government associations (LGAs) have an essential role in sharing knowledge related to local governance. They are the main institutions responsible for facilitating knowledge sharing among local authorities in their respective countries to help build their capacity. They also have a central role in building regional and continental local governance networks in order to help move the decentralization process forward in many parts of the world.

The module provides a range of methods, or tools, that can be used to help associations share knowledge with their members, as well as with sister organizations on the continent and globally. This module may also be useful to larger municipalities that are looking for ways to improve knowledge sharing in their own administrations as well as with the community.

The module is divided into six sections, each of which focuses on a different aspect of knowledge sharing. These include:

- Section 3.1: What is knowledge sharing and how can it improve local governance?
- Section 3.2: Some Basic Principles of Knowledge Sharing
- Section 3.3: Knowledge Sharing Meetings
- Section 3.4: Learning from colleagues and peers
- Section 3.5: Using information communication technologies to share knowledge
- Section 3.6: Information materials that promote knowledge sharing

### 3.1 What is knowledge sharing and how can it improve local governance?

In the early 1990s, organizations of all kinds began to formalize the concept of knowledge sharing. In a work environment, knowledge sharing generally refers to the act of encouraging open and inclusive sharing of expertise and experiences among staff members and partners to support learning and change, with a view to improving the effectiveness and impact of our work.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, knowledge sharing places value and importance on learning from the practices of colleagues and peers. It rests on the assumption that if we pool our individual knowledge and experience so that it becomes collective knowledge, we will be able to move forward more quickly and effectively in our work.

In fact, the practice of sharing knowledge to teach and learn from others has been going on for millennia, through both oral and written traditions. Africa has a valuable tradition of oral knowledge exchange that still exists in many parts, especially in rural areas.

In the context of local governance and decentralization, knowledge sharing is very important because of the relatively recent efforts of so many countries to decentralize and place more administrative control in the hands of local governments. More and more, local governments play a key role in delivering important community services including health, education, water supply and infrastructure.

Local governments can benefit a great deal from sharing the experiences and lessons learned, both positive and negative, from the practices they have initiated. This knowledge can help build self-reliance and allow them to better incorporate good governance models and practices in their own administrations, including participatory, transparent and accountable policy development, planning, resource mobilization, and management as well as the provision of accessible, equitable services for the community.

### National Local Government Associations Have a Critical Role in Knowledge Sharing

The main way that local governments participate in a local governance network that shares knowledge is through membership in their national local government associations. National associations have a central role in facilitating knowledge sharing among their members to help build their capacity and to better support them and represent their interests at the national level. The ability of national associations to do this well is therefore a top priority that contributes to their relevance and organizational effectiveness.

National associations are also an important hub of knowledge about decentralization and local governance that can be shared in their regions and on the continent. They have much to contribute to and learn from sister organizations in their regions and globally, and this knowledge can in turn be shared with members.

The following sections of Module 3 outline some of the most common ways that organizations facilitate knowledge sharing, both internally with colleagues and externally with other organizations. Each method or approach includes a description of what it is and when and how it can be used. Where possible, specific examples are provided that show how national associations can use a given method or approach to facilitate knowledge sharing with their members and sister organizations.

### 3.2 Some Basic Principles of Knowledge Sharing

An effective knowledge sharing program or process depends on a few basic principles.

#### Develop a Culture of Knowledge Sharing

First, knowledge sharing is based on openness and transparency, and a mutual respect among those involved. Give high status to traditional knowledge and information generated locally by members.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the *Knowledge Sharing Toolbox* of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, <http://www.kscgiar.org/toolbox>.

National associations can model good knowledge sharing behaviours by asking themselves as well as colleagues:

- “Who else have you shared this document/report with?”
  - “Do you know someone who could make use of this information?”
  - “Can members make use of this information?”
- “What have you learned from this project/program/activity?”
  - “Who could you share these lessons with?”
  - “Would members benefit from these lessons?”
- “Who are the experts in this topic/sectors/regions either inside or outside the organization?”
  - “Have you discussed this with these experts? If so, what have you learned?”
  - “How could Members learn from these experts?”<sup>3</sup>

### Understand the type of knowledge needed by members

Some knowledge is technical in nature and other information is shared simply to raise awareness about an issue. There are different methods that can be used in these cases, some of which are outlined in the next section.

It is important to develop an understanding of how members tend to seek information.

## 3.3 Knowledge Sharing Meetings

This section describes how national associations can organize different types of meetings to facilitate knowledge sharing among members and sister organizations. The meetings described below can be used to encourage learning and exchange among peers, and in some cases to build consensus among members on local governance issues.

Local governments may also find this section useful, because the meetings described can promote learning and exchange internally among departments, as well as externally with the community.

The meetings are very conducive to engaging with the community and encouraging public participation on local government issues.

For more information about how to involve the community in local government issues and decision making, see the *Local Government Participatory Practices Manual* of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.<sup>4</sup>



### TIPS ON HOW MEMBERS TEND TO SEEK INFORMATION

- Respect traditional channels of communication and don't regard them as barriers to sharing knowledge
- Consider who should have access to the information and how they tend to seek information (for example, does consideration need to be given to specific groups, including women, youth, and rural and urban poor people)
- Consider whether literacy may be an issue – magazines, pamphlets and posters can be helpful, as well as audio and video materials
- Consider whether language may be an issue – if so; write materials in plain and appropriate language so that members looking for practical information can understand how to apply it. In some cases, translation may be required in order to make materials available to different language groups. If so, be sure to allocate resources to translation when budgeting for the production of materials.
- Consider how the use of telecommunications may exclude some members and seek alternatives

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from *Knowledge Sharing, Methods, Meetings and Tools*, CIDA, November 2003, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> *Local Government Participatory Practices Manual*, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2007: Ottawa. This document is available at FCM's International Centre For Municipal Development's website, located at [www.fcm.ca/international](http://www.fcm.ca/international).

### 3.3.1 Facilitated meetings and consultations

Facilitated meetings or consultations are meetings in which a facilitator helps the participants to conduct discussions on specific issues. These meetings are often held to help set priorities or to determine knowledge or information needs.

Some ways that national associations and local authorities can benefit from facilitated meetings are:

- to encourage member participation in decision making e.g. in developing national policy positions
- to help develop local government priorities; e.g. capacity building needs of members
- to discuss information or training needs of a specific group (e.g. women elected officials, administrative officials)
- to help achieve a consensus regarding a controversial issue

The facilitator is generally a neutral party who does not take sides or express a point of view during the meeting. The facilitator can advocate for fair, open, and inclusive procedures to accomplish the group's work.

The facilitator usually assures that the meeting is on track, determines whose turn it is to speak during open discussions, and makes sure that the sessions start and end on time. Box 3.1 describes some group facilitation norms that are widely followed. These norms are described in *The Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* (by Sam Karner, 1996, New Society Publishers). The guide introduces the reader to various dimensions of facilitation, including how to design realistic meeting agendas, achieve full participation, promote mutual understanding, and help groups come to agreement. The book is useful for beginners as well as trained, professional facilitators.

### BOX 3.1 – GROUP FACILITATION NORMS

- Everyone participates, not just the vocal few.
- People give each other room to think and get their thoughts all the way out.
- Opposing viewpoints are allowed to exist.
- People draw each other out with supportive questions. "Is this what you mean?"
- Each member makes the effort to pay attention to the person speaking.
- People are able to listen to each other's ideas because they know that their own ideas will also be heard.
- Each member speaks up on matters of controversy. Everyone knows where everyone stands.
- Members can accurately represent each other's point of view. – even when they don't agree with them.
- People refrain from talking behind each other's backs.
- Even in the face of opposition from the person-in-charge, people are encouraged to stand up for their beliefs.
- A problem is not considered solved until everyone who will be affected by the solution understands the reasoning.
- When people make an agreement, it is assumed that the decision still reflects a wide range of perspectives.

### 3.3.2 Training workshops and seminars

Short training workshops and seminars are important for the rapid acquisition of knowledge and skills. Training workshops are especially helpful when participants must gain technical knowledge, but they can also be used to raise awareness about an issue.

More and more, training workshops and seminars make use of a dynamic learning process, in which participants interact with their peers and share what they know. Participants learn from each other's views and experiences. While experts can be involved to impart important technical knowledge, workshops and seminars usually make use of a facilitator who guides the process and encourages participation. Participants frequently work in small subgroups of four or five people to work through the training material.

National associations can organize training workshops and seminars to help build the capacity of local governments in areas in which members have identified a need. Keep in mind that it may be necessary to raise funds to develop the training program and bring participants together in a central location. Where resources are limited, national associations can organize training activities when members are coming together anyways, like at their Annual General Meeting or Congress.

Likewise, local governments can organize workshops and seminars within their administrations. Workshops can be a useful way to inform the community about changes or improvements in local government services.

One example of how a national association organized training activities to help deal with the under-representation of women in local government is the Women in District Governance and Development Training Program of the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG). Box 3.2 provides an overview of the program.

#### BOX 3.2 – THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF GHANA: WOMEN IN DISTRICT GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In the 1990s in Ghana, fewer than 10% of District Assembly members and slightly less than a quarter of administrative staff of local governments were women. In an effort to address the under-representation of women in local government, NALAG began a program of research, awareness-raising and training with support from the Association Capacity Building (ACB) Program of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA).

Through the program NALAG engaged in a number of activities, including:

- Conducting field research involving both women and men in local government, and developing a policy paper on the position of women in local government;
- Identifying problems leading to and arising from the under-representation of women in local governance, and highlighting a range of training needs;
- developing a training manual to support women elected representatives and potential candidates, in partnership with a local gender expert. The training manual was circulated to all district assemblies and women councilors;
- conducting training programs for women at the District Assembly level, focused on leadership, debating and advocacy skills and on drafting project funding proposals.

As a result of the above activities, gender is now a core issue within NALAG and many more women participate in its annual conference. In addition, NALAG's constitution has been amended to facilitate the nomination of councillors to the Executive Board, which has brought in many more women, including the current Vice-President of NALAG. NALAG continues to promote greater gender sensitivity among men, especially those in traditional leadership roles.

### After action review (AAR)

**3.3.3** The AAR is a simple process used by a team to capture the lessons learned from past successes and failures with the goal of improving future performance. It is an opportunity for a team to reflect on a project, activity, event or task so that the next time, they can do better.

One example of how a national association could benefit from an AAR is to conduct one with staff directly following the annual general meeting or congress, which is the most important venue for outreach with members.



#### TIPS ON HOW TO CONDUCT AN AAR

- Hold the AAR immediately while all participants are available and their memories are fresh. Learning can then be applied right away, even on the next day.
- Create the right climate – one of openness and commitment to learning. Everyone should participate in an atmosphere free from the concept of seniority or rank. AARs are learning events rather than critiques and should not be treated as a personal performance evaluation.
- Appoint a facilitator who will help the team to 'learn' answers. People must be drawn out, both for their own learning and the group's learning.
- Ask 'what was supposed to happen?'
- Ask 'what actually happened?' The team should understand and agree about what happened.
- Now compare the plan with reality. Record the key points. This clarifies what happened and compares it to what was supposed to happen. It facilitates sharing of learning experiences within the team and provides the basis for a broader learning programme in the organisation.
- Ask 'Why were there differences?' and 'What did we learn?' Identify and discuss successes and shortfalls. Put in place action plans to sustain the successes and to improve upon the shortfalls.
- Ask 'who do we want to share our experience with?' and 'How will we do this?'

From: *Learning to Fly: Practical Knowledge Management from Some of the World's Leading Learning Organizations*. Collison, Chris; Parcell, Geoff. 2004. Capstone, Chichester, GB. 312 p. See the website at: <http://www.chriscollison.com/l2f/>

### Knowledge Fairs

**3.3.4** Knowledge fairs are essentially expositions that put on display knowledge – general information, best practices, lessons learned, objects and displays, etc. related to a particular theme or themes. Knowledge fairs tend to be free-flowing, open, flexible, and non-hierarchical and are based on the principle of learning and exchange. At a knowledge fair, people of all different levels and types can see what is happening, can interact with each other, and can see what others are doing.

There are many opportunities for people working on local governance – be they staff of local governments or national associations, elected officials and even community groups – to contribute to and participate in a knowledge fair. National associations can organize a knowledge fair as a side event during their annual general meeting. This is an opportune time for local governments to display practices they would like to share with other members and to network with members on issues of mutual importance.

To provide one example, the Association of Municipalities of Mali organized an expo during its annual Journée des communes in November 2005. The expo allowed local authorities, community groups, donors and government departments to display and share some of their materials and respond to delegates' questions.

There are also opportunities for local governments and associations to share knowledge more broadly on the continent and globally, by participating in knowledge fairs held during regional, continental and global conferences.

For more information about how to organize a knowledge fair, see Steve Denning's *The Horizontal Organizational Ritual: The Knowledge Fair*, located at: [http://www.stevedenning.com/knowledge\\_fair.html](http://www.stevedenning.com/knowledge_fair.html).



## TIP: SOME DOS AND DON'T'S FOR ORGANIZING A KNOWLEDGE FAIR

- Do get top level support
- Do publicize the fair widely
- Do put the fair on main thoroughfare where there is a lot of foot traffic, e.g. in the atrium of the organization
- Do put your best communities of practice on display
- Do be realistic about how much time it takes for communities to prepare and display
- Do get common physical displays for booths so as to convey an image of diversity with integration.
- Do plan ahead for electric power, which can be substantial if computers are used.
- Do plan to have technicians on hand when things break down.
- Do plan for security of equipment when booths are not staffed
- Don't plan in too much detail for the actual booths – communities can self-organize within a common framework.
- Don't accept a decision to put the fair in an out-of-the-way space - location is essential for a successful fair
- Don't be too serious - a fair can be fun.

### 3.3.5 Annual General Meetings

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Congress of a National LGA may be one of the only opportunities for members to come together as a group representing local governments across the country. It is one of the most important venues for national associations to do outreach with their members, for members to discuss their strategic plans and to exchange experience and information. The AGM is therefore an ideal forum to hold a range of knowledge sharing events alongside the regular business of the AGM.

Well in advance of the AGM, national associations should make efforts to determine what the knowledge needs and interests of members are, so that they can plan appropriately for knowledge sharing activities. It is important to allocate time and resources to these activities. Below are some examples of the types of activities that can be organized.

#### Committee meetings

The AGM provides an important platform for members to discuss policy issues and reach agreement on directions to be pursued by the national association. Some associations have committees comprised of a sub-group members.

The committee oversees the policy and program work of the association in a given area. Depending on the resources available, committees may meet as often as the Board of Directors meets. But even if the committee can only meet at the AGM, these meetings can lay the groundwork for important policy decisions.

One example of a national association that relies heavily on its committees is the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which has nine Standing Committees, including:

- Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Government
- Community Safety and Crime Prevention
- Environmental Issues and Sustainable Development
- International Relations
- Municipal Finance and Intergovernmental Arrangements
- Municipal Infrastructure and Transportation Policy
- Northern Forum
- Rural Forum
- Social Economic Development

#### Training Workshops

National associations can conduct training workshops for members that have expressed a need for training in a given area. The workshops can take place directly before or after the AGM, or during the AGM in a case where time has been allocated to such side events. See section 3.3.2 for more information about training workshops or seminars.

#### Knowledge Fairs

National associations may wish to coordinate a knowledge fair that runs concurrently with the AGM. This is a popular way for members and other groups involved in local governance issues to display their work. See section 3.3.4 for more information about knowledge fairs.

#### Facilitated meetings

Facilitated meetings can be organized to raise awareness about an issue or to encourage input from members on a given issue. National associations may wish to invite guests with expertise in an area of interest to members. Depending on the focus of the session, these guests could come from different orders of government, community groups, local governments themselves or international organizations. See section 3.1 for more information about facilitated meetings.

It is possible for a national association to have a variety of activities like those described above, provided that resources and time are available. For

example, the Association of Municipalities of Mali organized an expo (a knowledge fair) during its annual Journée des communes in November 2005. It also held various workshops that included panel presentations.

### 3.3.6 Regional/international meetings

There are a number of venues that national associations and local governments can tap into in order to share knowledge and learn from colleagues and peers working on local governance issues. National associations can make efforts to enable the participation of some of their members by helping to secure funding for their participation, and by helping to arrange for their participation as a speaker in one of the sessions, or as an exhibitor in the knowledge fair. Some examples are described below.

#### Africities

Africities is a Pan-African conference held in alternating cities in Africa every three years to provide a platform for political dialogue on decentralization. Africities is an important forum for continental exchange of information and good practices between elected local government officials (mayors), central government agencies responsible for local government, technical and administrative municipal officials, local government research and training institutions, and donors.

National associations and local governments can benefit from the knowledge sharing events held at Africities, which include various thematic and networking sessions that promote in-depth exchange on the overall theme of the Summit.

There are plenty of opportunities for local governments in Africa to showcase their experiences, including a knowledge fair called Citexpo. National associations can help members identify sources of funding to attend the conference and may be able to help enable members to participate actively as speakers or resource people for a given session that relates to their expertise.

#### FLACMA Annual Congress

The Federation of Latin American Cities, Municipalities and Associations (FLACMA) holds an Annual Congress to promote the exchange of ideas and experiences on issues of importance to the Latin America municipal agenda, including: local democracy, social participation, competitiveness for territorial economic development, urban poverty, environmental sustainability, decentralization, and local autonomy.

#### United Cities and Local Governments World Congress

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) represents and defends the interests of local governments on the world stage. Over 1000 cities and 112 local government associations are members of UCLG. UCLG aims to be the united voice and world advocate of democratic local self-government, promoting its values, objectives and interests, through cooperation between local governments, and within the wider international community. It has eight regional sections, including: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America (FLACMA, see example above), Europe, Euro-Asia, Middle East and West Asia, North America and the Metropolitan Section (representing world metropolises).

UCLG has held two World Congresses, the last being in July 2007 in Jeju, South Korea. Nearly 2000 mayors, councilors, and representatives of cities and local and regional governments of the world came together to dialogue about the most urgent aspirations and expectations of local and regional governments. UCLG Regional Sections may also hold regular Congresses. For example, UCLG-ASPAC (Asia-Pacific) will hold its 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress in Thailand in July 2008.

For more information about UCLG and its regional sections, see:

<http://www.cities-localgovernments.org>

#### World Urban Forum

The World Urban Forum (WUF) was established by the United Nations to examine one of the most pressing issues facing the world today: rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies and policies. WUF is a biennial gathering that is attended by a wide range of partners, including nongovernmental organizations, community-based organizations, urban professionals, academics, governments, local authorities and national and international associations of local governments. It gives all these actors a common platform to discuss urban issues in formal and informal ways and come up with action oriented proposals to create sustainable cities. UN-Habitat and a host country are responsible for organizing WUF.

Like regional meetings, WUF and UCLG Congresses are important venues for knowledge sharing events and activities. For national associations and local governments, they present an opportunity to learn and exchange with others about urban issues in other parts of the world.

For more information about WUF, see the website at: <http://www.unhabitat.org/wuf/>

## 3.4 Learning from colleagues and peers

Learning from colleagues and peers lies at the heart of a successful practice of knowledge sharing. Several methods of peer exchange have been developed to help maximize learning, and some of the most common ones are described below.

### Peer assist

**3.4.1** The peer assist method of knowledge sharing was first introduced by British Petroleum and is now widely used by many organizations. It involves bringing together a group of peers to get feedback on a problem, project, or activity, and then drawing lessons from the participants' knowledge and experience. It is based on the assumption that someone has already been faced with the situation or problem that you face, and it is possible to avoid mistakes by learning from them.

Peer assists may be useful when employees of a national association or local authority, or elected officials:

- are starting a new job, activity or project and could benefit from the advice of more experienced people;
- are faced with a problem that another person or member has faced in the past
- have not had to deal with a given situation for a long time and are not sure what new procedures to follow.
- are implementing a good governance model or pilot project that is similar to one that another municipality has completed.

National associations are in a good position to connect local authorities, their employees or elected officials that would like to learn from each other's experience. They may wish to set up a peer assist program for members or facilitate peer assists on an ad hoc basis.

Keep in mind that it may be necessary to raise funds in order to bring together peers in a face-to-face meeting. An appropriate time to organize peer assists may be during an association's annual general meeting, when members are coming together anyways.



### TIPS ON HOW TO CONDUCT A PEER ASSIST

- Communicate the purpose. Peer assists work well when the purpose is clear and you communicate that purpose to participants.
- Share your peer assist plans with others. Consider whether someone else has already solved the problem. They may have similar needs.
- Identify a facilitator for the meeting. The role of the facilitator is to ensure that by managing the process the meeting participants reach the desired outcome.
- Schedule a date for the peer assist. Ensure it is early enough to do something different with what you have learned.
- Invite potential participants who have the diversity of skills, competencies and experience needed for the peer assist. Avoid 'the Usual Suspects.' It works well with six to eight people. Break up larger groups so everyone gets to voice their experience and ideas.
- Get clear on the desired deliverables of the peer assist (usually options and insights), and then plan the time to achieve that.
- Allow time to socialise in order to develop rapport.
- Allow a day and a half for the peer assist. Schedule time to Tell, Ask, Analyse and Feedback.
- Create the right environment. Spend some time creating the right environment for sharing. Plan the event to allow a balance between telling and listening.
- Listen for understanding and how you might improve your own activity.
- Consider who else might benefit from this knowledge, and then share it with them.
- Commit to actions and keep the peer assist team updated.

From: *Learning to fly: Practical knowledge management from some of the world's leading learning organizations*. Collison, Chris; Parcell, Geoff. 2004. Capstone.

## Mentoring

**3.4.2** Mentoring is a process by which an older or more experienced person (usually a senior staff member) works closely with a less experienced one, freely offering advice, support and encouragement. The mentor acts as a role model who inspires the novice (or mentee). The mentor prepares the mentee for his or her role, helping the mentee to develop the skills required to do the job effectively. Ideally, the mentor and the mentee build a working relationship that is based on trust and a supportive friendship. Mentors usually commit to a relatively long-term relationship with mentees, even up to a year or more.

National associations and local governments could run mentoring programs to help newer staff transition into more senior roles with greater responsibility. Mentors can be very helpful in introducing mentees to the networks they have established. In the case of associations, their effectiveness depends largely on the strength of their ties with their members. Junior staff needs to be aware of who the people are in these networks, and the protocol to follow in working with them.

National associations could introduce the concept of mentoring to their members, who could benefit from running mentoring programs in their own administrations.

For an example of a mentoring program, see the Gender and Diversity Program of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), available on the internet at <http://www.genderdiversity.cgiar.org>. The CGIAR Gender and Diversity Program launched its mentoring program in 2003 through a series of pilot initiatives.

## Field visits or exchanges

**3.4.3** Field visits or exchanges can be a useful way for local governments to look at what others have done and decide which of the practices can be adapted in their community or municipality. National associations can help to arrange or even participate in field visits based on needs expressed by members. It may be necessary to raise funds for travel and expenses related to the exchange.

After the visit, the participants should make a report of what they saw and share their views with colleagues on what can be usefully adapted in their situation. Once a decision has been made

on an action plan, pilot activities can be carried out on a small scale in order to test the idea and its possible adaptation in the community. The principle is to strengthen the community's capacity building to evaluate and adapt knowledge from the outside to suit its own social situation and values.<sup>5</sup>

## Storytelling

**3.4.4** One of the best ways to communicate complex ideas, key messages and lessons learned is through a good story. Storytelling has become a popular method used to share and transfer knowledge. Stories have the ability to inspire people and motivate them to learn. They also help to connect people with each other and build relationships because they usually have a personal element associated with the person who is telling the story.

Stephen Denning, who wrote *The leader's guide to storytelling: mastering the art and discipline of business narrative*,<sup>6</sup> believes that there is something to tell a story about when a problem arises, and that knowledge sharing stories should be about issues and difficulties. He believes we can learn a great deal from how problems were dealt with, and why the course of action solved the problem. The important point to keep in mind is that for learning to take place, stories need an explanation.



### TIPS ON STORYTELLING

The story:

- Should be brief, simple and concise, but gives enough background information
- Involves a character people can easily identify with
- Is plausible, lively and exciting
- Is told with conviction
- Always ends on a positive note

For more information about storytelling, see SDC's *Guide to Using Story and Narrative Tools in Development Co-operation, Practitioner's Version* (draft); Thematic Service Knowledge and Research in Collaboration with Sparknow Ltd., London.

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from *Sharing Knowledge for Community Development and Transformation: A Handbook*, Kingo J. Mchombu, printed by DLR International in Canada for the Oxfam Horn of Africa Capacity Building Programme, August 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Published by Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, 2005

### 3.4.5 Tapping into regional or international technical assistance organizations

There are a number of regional and international organizations that provide technical assistance to national LGAs and local governments, and they may run a number of innovative courses and seminars for people in the municipal sector, such as public administrators of local governments and elected officials. Some of these include:

- Municipal Development Partnership (MDP - Eastern and Southern Africa); <http://www.mdpafrica.org.zw/>
- Partenariat pour le développement municipal (PDM - West and Central Africa); <http://www.pdm-net.org/>
- Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF); [www.clgf.org](http://www.clgf.org)
- United Cities and Local Governments (and their respective regional bodies) <http://www.cities-localgovernments.org>

National associations may be able to facilitate member participation in the programs offered by these institutions, as well as participate in association capacity building activities.

These organizations also manage knowledge related to local governance and decentralization, and share this information with local governments, national associations, central governments and other institutions. National associations and local governments can look to these organizations for expertise in a number of areas. These organizations are well connected to a regional network of local governments and national associations and can likely identify experts that may be required.

### 3.4.6 Communities of Practice

One example of how a group of peers can learn from each other is referred to as a community of practice (COP). A COP is a network of people who are motivated by something they know how to do and who interact regularly (either physically or through the internet) to learn how to do it better. Members of the COP have a shared area of inquiry (for example, a policy issue, a research question, and a practice) that is linked to the member's daily work. They share knowledge by telling stories and offering case studies, tools and documents that relate to the COP's interests or needs.

COPs work best when there is regular communication among members and members have a sense of belonging. They help people to collaborate and learn from each other. To succeed, COPs need a coordinator, time, and a common space for resources or community events. This space could either be virtual (a website), or a physical meeting space in cases where those involved are able to meet regularly.

For example, national associations could develop a COP with sister organizations. The COP could address the issue of member engagement and explore the challenges of working with rural and remote members. Limitations that may exist include finding the time and resources to meet virtually and difficulty in allocating staff time to a coordinating role.

Because COPs need regular communication, it is unrealistic to expect that members of the association could participate in a COP to engage with one another unless they were connected to the internet and could communicate regularly with each other from a distance. It may be more appropriate for associations to help facilitate knowledge sharing among members through some of the other methods described in this guide (e.g. peer assists, field visits, knowledge fairs, or annual general meeting knowledge sharing events).

For more information about COPS, see Etienne Wenger's *Cultivating a Community of Practice: A quick start-up guide*, available on the internet at: [http://www.ewenger.com/theory/start-up\\_guide\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.ewenger.com/theory/start-up_guide_PDF.pdf)

## 3.5 Using information communication technologies to share knowledge

Information communication technologies, such as the internet, community radio and video can be used strategically by national associations to communicate with members and sister organizations in Africa and globally.

### The internet

**3.5.1** National associations can operate websites to do outreach with members as well as other institutions and organizations interested in local governance. Websites are a useful tool to communicate information to the public, particularly to raise awareness about the association and any news or events of interest to members. Written in plain and accessible language, they generally include the following type of information:

- a description of the mission and programs of the organization
- contact information of the office and staff
- latest news of the association (and possibly members)
- calendar of events (workshops, local elections, annual general meeting, etc.)
- a description of partners
- possibly a list of members of the association as well as the Board of Directors
- a resource center with publications and other documents or resources that may be of interest to members

For an example, see the website of the Association of Municipalities of Mali, located at:

<http://www.pdm-net.org/amm-mali/>

Some associations may also wish to host an “intranet” on behalf of members. An intranet would allow members to read information that is available only to members and staff of the association. In a situation where members are well connected to the internet and are computer literate, members could also post information, engage in online discussions, and communicate with one another by email.

In many countries it is still difficult for rural and remote communities to access the internet. If a computer with internet access is available, some barriers to using it may exist. For example, the connection may be quite slow or employees of local authorities and elected officials may not be highly computer literate. In addition, the internet may not be their preferred option in terms of how they wish to receive information from the national association. National associations should keep in mind:

- which members have access to the internet, the ability to use it and more importantly, the interest and willingness to use it to receive information
- for those members that are unlikely to use it, is training available or are there alternative ways that they prefer to receive information

Larger municipalities that have a significant segment of the population with internet access may wish to create a website as well. Municipal websites are an excellent tool for raising awareness about the operations and services of the municipality. They usually provide information about the political and administrative structure of the municipality, services offered by the municipality, as well as information geared towards tourists and the business community.

### 3.5.2 Radio or audio listening forums and TV or video viewing

The use of radio or audio is a valuable way to share knowledge that builds on traditions of oral knowledge exchange. It can help involve rural and remote communities, and semi-literate people, in local government capacity building activities or in awareness raising initiatives.

Radio can be used to help build the capacity of local governments. For example, the Municipal Development Partnership (Eastern and Southern Africa) and the World Bank Institute developed the Africa Good Governance on the Radio Waves Program, which supports local government capacity building and community empowerment through radio. Box 3.5 describes how the program works.

#### BOX 3.5 – AFRICA GOOD GOVERNANCE ON THE RADIO WAVES PROGRAM

The Africa Good Governance on the Radio Waves Program is a distance learning program delivered through the radio in a number of countries in Africa. The program aims to reach mayors, local public officials, members of local communities and representatives of the civil society in a number of countries, especially those who reside outside of the major metropolitan areas.

The program offers a number of training modules on specific local government issues. Each module lasts for several weeks and during this period of time the course is broadcast over the airwaves once a week at the same time.

The program relies heavily on the participants' active participation and is interactive. Participants receive course materials including discussion/reflection questions, self-evaluation exercises, a course workbook, and other relevant documents necessary to promote self-guided learning. The program also features relevant regional case examples and interviews with representatives of key stakeholder groups and members of the community in the listeners' countries.

For more information about the program, see the MDP (East and Southern Africa) website at: <http://www.mdpafrica.org.zw/>

National associations may wish to help members tap into programs such as MDP's, or they may wish to develop a radio program in their own country geared to members' interests. Another way that national associations can use audio to facilitate knowledge sharing among members is by taping the proceedings of meetings or events and sending the audiocassettes to members who were unable to attend, but who are interested in the proceedings.

Similarly, local governments can reach the public by organizing listening forums around radio programs with interesting content about community issues. A more cost effective method may be for municipalities to arrange listening forums for content that has been tape recorded. For example, municipalities could develop an audio version of a newsletter to help inform semi-literate people about the community news.

TV and video is another excellent way to raise awareness about issues, though the cost of filming and broadcasting may be prohibitive. Rather than producing their own TV shows or videos, national associations or local governments may be able to access videos made by others that are relevant to members or their communities, respectively, and organize viewing forums.

### 3.5.3 Conference call/Videconference

When the technology is available, reliable, and affordable, conference calls and videoconferences can be a great way to connect people who work together from a distance. They tend to be most successful when there is a clear objective and a well-planned agenda, and they usually require a Chair or a Facilitator, depending on the purpose of the meeting.

Teleconferences or videoconferences can be useful to help build relationships between the organizations and to keep the momentum going for program activities. The advantage of a videoconference over a teleconference is that it brings people face-to-face in a meeting, even though they may physically be in entirely different parts of the world. However, the technology can sometimes be slow and delayed. As well, videoconferencing usually benefits people who live in or can travel to large municipalities where the technology is located.

National associations and local governments should keep in mind that teleconference and videoconference technology is still very expensive, especially when there are several different locations involved. It may actually be less costly to bring people together in a face-to-face meeting.

## 3.6 Information materials that promote knowledge sharing

### Newsletters

**3.6.1** Newsletters are one of the most important communication tools available to organizations of all kinds. National associations can keep members (and other interested parties) informed about what is going on in the association and what is planned. They can also facilitate knowledge sharing by including stories about the good practices of members in each issue. Similarly, local authorities can develop a newsletter for their community that helps raise awareness about issues in their jurisdiction.

The newsletter of the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG), *Grassroots News*, started out as a quarterly publication with its first issue published in January 1997. It was very successful in reaching out to district assemblies throughout the country as well as the Ministry of Local Government, Members of Parliament, the donor community, NGOS, etc.

The Association of Municipalities of Nicaragua (AMUNIC) posts its newsletter on its website. See [www.amunic.org](http://www.amunic.org) for an example.

Keep in mind that producing a newsletter can be quite expensive and may require outside financial support. That said, even if it is only possible to publish a newsletter infrequently, the newsletter is an effective means of keeping members connected to the association and aware and informed of its activities.

### Information Campaigns

**3.6.2** Information campaigns are focused and intense information exchanges around a specific issue, for a specified period of time. They help to create the needed social climate for the development and adoption of new ideas on a particular topic. They usually make use of a combination of media, like radio and TV public service announcements, posters and pamphlets, and popular theatre. For example, information campaigns have been used in many countries in Africa to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS.

National associations and local governments could run information campaigns to raise awareness about key issues and encourage the local population to take action. Some examples include:

- a campaign informing citizens of their civic responsibility to vote and explain how to go about voting
- a campaign that raises awareness about the importance for women to get involved in local politics
- an issue-based campaign that encourages input from the local population, such as a potential new development or a new service being considered

### 3.6.3 Resource Centre or “Knowledge Centre”

A resource centre or “knowledge centre” is basically an enhanced version of a library. This type of center focuses on sharing knowledge as well as being a repository of information related to a given area. Knowledge centres typically collect, organize and disseminate both knowledge and information. This does not necessarily mean that the knowledge centre actually performs all of these activities itself. Rather, it creates a framework and provides leadership, co-ordination, guidance and expertise.

National associations are responsible for facilitating knowledge sharing among members and are in an ideal position to coordinate knowledge centers on decentralization and local governance in their countries. Members of an association could be encouraged to contribute good practices and lessons learned to the center, and the association could organize this knowledge and disseminate it throughout its local government network. In addition, national associations are well placed to collect knowledge from outside their countries and share it with their members.

The Association of Municipalities of Mali has a knowledge center. See its website at: <http://www.pdm-net.org/amm-mali/>

The Association of Municipalities of Nicaragua has a “virtual library” on its website, where a range of publications and manuals are posted. See [www.amunic.org](http://www.amunic.org)

## In summary

The knowledge sharing methods and approaches included in Module 3 are some of the most commonly used ones by organizations of all kinds — including private and public sector organizations, as well as grassroots community organizations.

Keep in mind that these are guidelines only and there is plenty of room for innovation in the field of knowledge sharing. One only has to read the growing body of literature on knowledge sharing to understand that it is a constantly evolving field.

We invite you to experiment with the various methods, and above all, to share them with your local government and national association peers, and to learn from them how they have done it. You are invited to send comments or additions to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities at [international@fcm.ca](mailto:international@fcm.ca).

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training: <http://www.kmresource.com/>

Global Development Research Centre:  
<http://www.gdrc.org/kmgmt/>



# Appendix 1:

National Municipal League of Thailand

Knowledge Management Strategy

December 2006

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## 1 Introduction

In February 2005, the Executive Committee and staff of the National Municipal League of Thailand (NMT) developed a Strategic Plan for the League.

Their vision for NMT was to see it become known as the **'consultative voice of municipal development in Thailand' (active, innovative, cooperative, and strong voice of its members)**.

The Executive Committee identified three distinct roles for NMT:

**1. NMT as the Centre of Information** (Information and Knowledge Management) -on best practices, technical knowledge, and gaining valuable for all local authorities on pertinent topics such as legislation, finance, education, engineering, IT, human resources, etc.

**2. NMT as the Representative Voice of Municipalities in Thailand** (Networking and Advocacy) - strengthening NMT by networking and consulting all members on issues, speaking on behalf of municipalities in Thailand, negotiating with the various levels of government to amend constraining legislation, ensuring communication to benefit all members and levels of government regarding municipal issues

**3. NMT as the Center of Excellence in Municipal Development** (Human Resource Development and Training)– by being an example of good leadership and management, continuing to benchmark NMT's service capacity to members, providing outreach services, assisting all municipalities in learning, skill development and having strong public relations locally and internationally.

Some of the key proposals for action related to information and knowledge that came out of the strategic planning exercise were:

1. Establish NMT as the Centre of Information on issues of local governance – develops the program based on needs of the members and acquire appropriate IT and other technologies to gather current, accurate information on all facets of municipal development to exchange among members and overseas partners
2. Build on the capacity of NMT staff to coordinate learning and exchange opportunities for elected officials and staff of municipal government - seek specialists and technical assistance with overseas partners as required

3. Conduct research on laws, regulations and other important issues constraining municipal governments and network constructively with Central Government to change legislation and practices

4. Communicate and advise local governments on how to initiate institutional and infrastructure change coming with decentralisation

As a follow up to the Strategic Plan, NMT decided that it would be helpful to conduct a knowledge management workshop to get a better understanding of the role of of municipal associations in knowledge management to do learn about various tools that promote learning and sharing. The main objective of the workshop was to develop a knowledge management strategy and an action plan. During the workshop NMT staff and Board members reiterated their commitment to dedicating resources and working hard towards the achievement of these goals. They also identified some of the strengths and weaknesses of the League with regards to knowledge management. While the League has the full support of the Executive, excellent facilities and equipment to carry out KM responsibilities, policy support and dedicated staff, it also needs to build its capacity in terms of human resources at the middle management level, secure stronger participation of its members and close the gap between theory and practice. The purpose of this Knowledge Management Strategy is to provide a road map and guiding principles on the way information and knowledge will be developed, documented and shared amongst NMT members and to an action plan to help NMT reach it objective to become a Centre of knowledge and excellence on local government in Thailand. The work plan that is included in this strategy is an attempt to address these issues in a very practical way.

## 2. Definition of Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is at the centre of what a local government association does. It involves the identification, documentation, analysis, packaging, storage, retrieval and sharing of the knowledge and experience from all its members. It should lead to learning and more efficient and effective municipal management and service delivery as members share their best practices and innovative approaches.

Knowledge management involves good two-way communications between the association and its members, and the active promotion of collaboration and sharing among the membership. NMT therefore will serve as a catalyst to promote a cul-

ture of knowledge, and as a hub where knowledge is collected, documented, and shared.

The information and knowledge thus developed by NMT or its members will be shared with all NMT members and will ultimately result in improved municipal management and service delivery.

### 3. Needs Identified

While NMT is already very active in the production and sharing of knowledge, some gaps were identified. These needs are addressed in the work plan.

- The information system NMT currently uses to manage its membership is inadequate. The League does not have basic information (including demographics) about its members, and does not have a system to keep provide timely updates on central government policy discussion or proposed regulations. NMT needs a multi-purpose information system that can help efficiently gather information and report to the membership and others in the larger municipal network;
- NMT needs to improve its capacity for public relations with its members and to mount information campaigns to inform them about the work it is doing through its sub-committees, and the progress it is making in advocating on behalf of local government;
- NMT needs to inform its membership in a timely manner about new regulations and legal issues that affect local governments;
- NMT needs to provide more technical information on municipal management and service delivery;
- Although NMT has already developed best practices, it needs to develop a more effective dissemination strategy;
- Above all, NMT needs to find a way to actively engage its members in knowledge activities and develop of culture of knowledge sharing.

### 4. Key Principles

The principles that NMT has identified as key to the success of its knowledge management initiative include:

- Ensure universal accessibility of the information and knowledge to all members, whether they are new or well-established municipalities, urban or rural, small or large;
- Use a push-pull approach that ensures that information and knowledge are sought from the membership as well disseminated to all;

- Use open, transparent and responsive approach to identify and respond to the knowledge needs of members;
- Ensure knowledge and information contribute to increase the visibility and credibility of women as effective actors in local governance;
- Coordinate efforts with partners and other stakeholders (institutes, academia) in the development of knowledge products.

### 5. Strategic Partners

NMT is committed to work with various Thai actors who are experienced in training, research, developing of guides, manuals, tools and knowledge products. These actors include institutes of technology, university departments, professional associations, etc. NMT will develop formal partnerships with some of these institutions because of the value they bring to local government issues.

### 6. Objectives

The Knowledge Management Strategy has three objectives:

- To help NMT establish itself as a Centre of Knowledge and integrate knowledge management as one of its lines of business by putting in place the required infrastructure and by creating a sub-committee to oversee it;
- To enhance members' participation in knowledge development and sharing by creating forums for exchanges on current research and development;
- To develop, gather, and share knowledge and best practices that promote excellence in municipal management and service delivery.

### 7. Knowledge Development and Sharing

NMT will make a concerted effort to raise its profile with its members. It will reach out to its members to identify best practices and innovations that could be shared with the entire membership, and be responsive to its members' requests for information of knowledge products. It will put in place the infrastructure that is necessary to achieve this and to promote knowledge development and sharing. Its ultimate goal is to create a culture of knowledge-sharing among members and to become a hub of knowledge for its membership.

## 8. Risks and Mitigation Strategies

The following are factors that could negatively impact the implementation of the knowledge management strategy:

- Lack of qualified staff to carry out the work
- Frequent turn over of staff
- Insufficient consensus and/or commitment from sub-committees and/or members to implement the action plan

In order to address these risks, the NMT Executive Committee will need to make some strategic decisions and act on the issue of lack of sufficient human resources. The Executive Committee will also need to become the “champion” and actively promote its activities to gain members’ support and active involvement.

## 9. Action Plan

As a complement to the Knowledge Management strategy, we present below a description of the activities NMT will undertake to strengthen its information and knowledge functions and thus meet some of its most significant objectives (as described in the introduction).

### 1. Development of an information system software

**Objective: To develop and maintain a system that will allow the League to have up-to-date information about its members to facilitate outreach, and to have easily trackable documentation, information and knowledge products. The current database is not performing well causing extra work and lost opportunities.**

Steps Required	Timeline	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Approval by
Develop TORs	Year 1 (2007)	NMLT Secretary	500,000 Bt	NMT Board
Hire private sector company				
Develop system				
Provide training to MNT Staff				
Re-catalogue documents				

## 2. Recruitment of new staff

**Objective:** To support and maintain the new information system and to ensure better communication and knowledge sharing with the members.

Steps Required	Timeline	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Approval by
Prepare documentation according to hiring procedures for 8 new staff: 1 manager and 3 support to maintain the system; and 4 staff to support sub-committee's work  Advertise Interview candidates  Hire and train	2007: 4 staff hired  2008: 4 more hired	NMT Secretary	2007: 480,000 Bt 2008 : 960,000 Bt	NMT Board

## 3. Address the issue of staff retention

**Objective:** To ensure stability in NMT middle management staff and increase retention, by offering better and more competitive incentives in terms of salary and benefits. This will ensure continuity and increased knowledge within the organization and in the long-term foster closer relationship between NMT staff and its members.

Steps Required	Timeline	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Approval by
Create a working group of Board members to review the issue and propose incentives  Seek Board approval  Include in the yearly budget and implement	Feb. 07  March 07  ??	NMT Secretary	As recommended by the working group	NMT Board

#### 4. Increase MNT research and policy capability

**Objective:** To hire a policy advisor on a one-year contract to increase MNT policy development capacity, and develop a formal partnership institute to carry on research on current election legislation and central government budgetary policies.

Steps Required	Timeline	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Approval by
Develop TORs for policy advisor and institute	Year 1 (2007)	NMT Secretary	Unknown	NMT Board
Draft MOU				
Put contracts in place				
Implement				

#### 5. Public relations campaign with members

**Objective:** Organize a well-coordinated public relation campaign to promote services and activities offered by NMT so members are well aware of the benefits they derive from their membership and participate more actively in NMT governance and activities.

Steps Required	Timeline	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Approval by
Develop messages	2007 and 2008	Sub-Committee on Environment  NMT Secretary	1 million Bt	NMT Board
Identify NMT spokespeople				
Develop materials				
Use existing meeting for promotional activities (AGM and other NMT events)				
Make use of TV program and newspapers current initiatives to reach out to the members				

## 6. Create a Training Facility for Local Governments

**Objective:** To promote professional development by providing tailored and inexpensive specialized training to municipal elected officials and staff, and to generate new revenues for NMT.

Steps Required	Timeline	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Approval by
<p>Carry out a needs assessment with NMT members</p> <p>Develop a comprehensive plan for training facility</p> <p>Procure equipment</p> <p>Contract trainers to develop curriculum and deliver training</p>	By July 2007	NMT Secretary	500,000 Bt for start up cost	NMT Board

## 7. Create a Resource and Archives Centre on Local Government

**Objective:** to create a comprehensive source of knowledge and information about local government for all municipalities in Thailand and to promote local government with the general public.

Steps Required	Timeline	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Approval by
<p>Form a Sub-Committee on Resource and Archives</p> <p>Retrain Librarian</p> <p>Acquire collection from members and others</p> <p>Procure necessary equipment (cabinets, shelves, preservation material)</p>	By Dec. 2009	NMT Secretary	1 million BT	NMT Board

<p><b>Technical Meetings</b> Objective: to provide professional development opportunities to municipal staff (Secretaries, advisors to the mayors, deputy mayors)</p>	NMT will continue to organize these meetings on an annual basis
<p><b>Meetings for Women Mayors</b> Objective: to support the creation and support of a women's caucus within NMT</p>	The second meeting will be organized this year
<p><b>Training Programs, including orientation for new mayors, training for finance and procurement staff and training for liveable cities for mayors.</b> Objective: to provide formal training to improve municipal management performance</p>	NMT will continue to organize these meetings on an annual basis
<p><b>Monthly newsletter</b> Objective: to provide information on ongoing activities and schedule of events</p>	Ongoing
<p><b>Monthly magazine</b> Objective: to provide more substantive information about members' activities and projects</p>	Ongoing
<p><b>Television programs</b> Objective: to promote the work of NMT and municipalities to the general public across the country. Currently presented twice a year.</p>	Will become a monthly program in 2007
<p><b>Newspaper articles and news items</b> Objective: to provide information on local governance to the general public. NMT targets 3 or 4 leading national newspapers and local newspapers as well.</p>	Ongoing
<p><b>Website (www.nmt.or.th)</b> Objective: to provide timely information to members and give them access to a library of documents and publications available electronically.</p>	NMT also provide support to a website for municipal employees which is linked to the NMT website (www.tessabam.com). This website is very interactive and has a lot of traffic, contrary to the NMT website, which is more static.
<p><b>Publications/Best practices</b> Objective: to share knowledge on a number of issues of interest for municipalities (traffic accidents, elections, rights of pedestrians, health, etc).</p>	Ongoing, and in response to members' requests. Often in partnership with institutes.
<p><b>Public consultations</b> Objective: to get feedback from the general public, civil society and the press on NMT and municipalities.</p>	Ongoing
<p><b>Consultations with BMA and surrounding municipalities</b> Objective: to ensure adequate services are provided in border communities.</p>	Ongoing
<p><b>Annual General Meeting and Exhibition</b> Objective: to provide members an opportunity to share knowledge, network, learn about new legislations or regulations, and to be exposed to various products and services offered by the private sector.</p>	On a yearly basis. Very well attended.
<p><b>Studies/Research</b> Objective: to get more in-depth knowledge in specific areas of key importance to municipalities (e.g. municipal finance, taxation, land tax, etc).</p>	Number of research project and topic work planned on a yearly basis

## 10. Conclusion

The National Municipal League of Thailand is in a very good position to become a Centre of knowledge on local government. To reach that goal, the first priorities will be to create the infrastructure, both in terms of human resources and systems to be able to reach out to its membership and convince members of the value of the services that the League can provide. Once the members are more fully engaged in the work of NMT, the systematization of the work it is already doing and the creation of systems to harness the knowledge members are collectively creating will ensure the success of NMT as a Knowledge Centre.

# Appendix 2:

## African Local Governance Program Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy

Guidelines for Implementation  
November 2004

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## 1.0 Introduction

An important objective of the ALGP is to strengthen continental/regional knowledge networks on local governance. Knowledge management and communications are therefore key components of the ALGP. The ALGP will disseminate approaches, tools and lessons learned from its models and pilots at the national and local levels, and thus contribute to a growing body of research, best practices and case studies on African decentralization. This information will be shared with pan African organizations, national and municipal governments, research institutions and donor countries that is expected to result in greater understanding and support for effective decentralization of services and for improved local governance as recommended by NEPAD.

The objectives of the knowledge management and communications strategy are to:

- ensure transparency regarding program management and operations;
- foster communication and dialogue among ALGP implementing partners and stakeholders;
- develop and document knowledge of decentralization and local governance based on the experiences of Mali, Ghana, Tanzania and Mozambique;
- facilitate the incubation of experiences and lessons learned through the ALGP;
- monitor and evaluate program activities to measure impact and build on lessons learned; and
- extend ALGP knowledge and experience to the broader African community.

## 2.0 Expected Results

Four outputs are expected:

- Communication and dialogue are proactively fostered among ALGP implementing partners and with stakeholders.

### *Indicator Number 1:*

Number and type of mechanisms for communication and dialogue among ALGP implementing partners and with stakeholders in place and active.

### *Indicator Number 2:*

Examples of effective dialogue sessions resulting in follow-up action.

- Knowledge on decentralization and local governance based on program experiences in Ghana, Mali, Mozambique and Tanzania is developed and documented.

### *Indicator Number 1:*

Number of useful knowledge products produced including products related to cross cutting themes (gender, HIV etc.) and disseminated to ALGP partners, and other stakeholders (governments, communities, regional and international organizations etc.)

### *Indicator Number 2:*

Number of requests for information on decentralization and local governance.

- Experiences and lessons learned through the ALGP are applied.

### *Indicator Number 1:*

Number and quality of implementation measures adopted as a result of lessons learned and experience of ALGP partners

### *Indicator Number 2:*

Number of capacity building activities requested by national associations, delivered by regional technical assistance institutions, based on lessons learned

- ALGP knowledge and experience is extended to the broader African community.

### *Indicator Number 1:*

Evidence of broad dissemination to other associations and interested stakeholders (governments, financial partners, etc.)

### *Indicator Number 2:*

Number of requests for ALGP-related knowledge products

### 3.0 Operational Definition of Knowledge Management and Communications in ALGP

Knowledge management in the context of the ALGP involves the documentation, analysis, packaging, storage, retrieval and sharing of the knowledge and experience emanating from the ALGP with key stakeholders. This includes regular monitoring and evaluation of the program in achieving its strategic objectives, and the application of lessons learned to subsequent program activities.

The ALGP Knowledge Management Team will carry out the following knowledge management and communications activities:

- Develop internal and external communication protocols for ALGP with the goal of providing regular communications about ALGP to key audiences;
- Share knowledge developed and experiences learned through the ALGP with ALGP implementing partners and stakeholders, as well as more broadly in other countries in Africa;
- Build capacity of staff to harness and use information and knowledge;
- Develop, publish, store, retrieve and disseminate a range of knowledge products targeted towards ALGP implementing partners and stakeholders, including case studies, manuals, toolkits, fact sheets, policy papers etc.;
- Use ALGP knowledge to advocate and lobby key stakeholders on decentralization and local governance issues;
- Develop and use an ALGP performance monitoring system to measure progress and results; and
- Design and develop learning workshops on a range of issues with ALGP implementing partners and/or key stakeholders (e.g. central governments, Mayors, national associations of municipalities of Mali, Ghana, Tanzania and Mozambique, etc.)

### 4.0 Target Groups – Who is ALGP Knowledge For?

Knowledge developed in the ALGP will be geared towards the following target audiences (see Table at the end of this document for a more detailed description of the key messages and mechanisms that will be used to reach these audiences):

### 4.1 ALGP Implementing Partners:

ALAT	the Association of Local Authorities of Tanzania
AMM	the Association of Municipalities of Mali
ANAM	the National Association of Municipalities of Mozambique
CCRA	Conseil de communes et régions en Afrique
FCM	Federation of Canadian Municipalities
MDP	the Municipal Development Partnership (East and Southern Africa)
NALAG	the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana
PDM	the Partenariat de développement municipale (West and Central Africa)

The ALGP will support the decentralization process in Tanzania, Mozambique, Ghana and Mali. The regional technical support agencies MDP and PDM will help to develop case studies, best practices, manuals/toolkits and lessons learned emanating from the ALGP experiences in these countries, and these will be shared with ALGP partners. MDP and PDM (and in some cases FCM) will also implement learning workshops on a range of issues to help build the capacities of their staff and the above national associations to respond to the needs of local governments at both the policy and operational levels.

### 4.2 Decentralization/Local Governance Practitioners

- Municipal staff
- Technical support agencies (e.g. MDP, PDM, etc.)

The ALGP will develop materials such as case studies, best practices, manuals and toolkits to help support practitioners working in the area of decentralization/local governance in ALGP implementing countries. It is expected that these materials will be shared more broadly in the Africa region as well.

### 4.3 Policy Makers

- Ministries responsible for decentralization
- District/central government departments
- Local government
- Local elected officials (Mayors and Councillors)

The ALGP will develop policy briefs, best practices and other materials to support effective decentralization policy and local governance programs.

#### 4.4 Beneficiaries

- Local governments
- Civil society (communities, men, women and children, etc.)

ALGP implementing partners will disseminate information and knowledge developed to local governments in their jurisdiction, including best practices, manuals/toolkits, etc. that helps build capacity of local governments to meet the needs of their communities. These materials may be shared more broadly in the Africa region through various local government networks and conferences.

#### 4.5 Funding Partners

The ALGP will report regularly to the Canadian International Development Agency on activities, results and impact of the program, and may share results and knowledge developed with other financial partners in the effort to ensure effective donor coordination in the local government sector.

#### 4.6 Research and Training Institutions

ALGP will share knowledge developed through the program with research and training institutions in the field of decentralization and local governance in the effort to share knowledge and further the objectives of decentralization in Africa and elsewhere.

#### 5.0 Process for Knowledge Management and Communications in ALGP

Each Knowledge Management Unit (PDM, MDP and FCM) will be responsible for a range of knowledge management/communications activities as identified in their annual work plans. The following procedures will help ensure that all information shared and knowledge developed is easily identifiable as being part of the ALGP, with a consistent format and style.

#### 5.1 Stakeholder Communications

The following mechanisms will be used to ensure effective communication among ALGP implementing partners and stakeholders:

- Regular use of email and FCM's interactive website
- Regular telephone/conference calls (may require interpretation)
- Videoconferencing
- Exchanges
- Study tours

Measures will be put in place to overcome possible language barriers.

##### 5.1.1 ALGP Partners E-Newsletter

The ALGP electronic newsletter will be sent periodically to ALGP implementing partners and interested stakeholders to provide updates on ALGP activities, events, results and opportunities of relevance to the ALGP. The newsletter will be produced jointly by MDP, PDM and FCM. ALGP partners will be encouraged to submit news updates on a regular basis to the key contact person in their regional office (MDP or PDM).

The e-newsletter will be distributed by email in the three working languages of the ALGP – English, French and Portuguese. It will also be posted in the ALGP section of FCM's interactive website.

#### 5.2 Guidelines for Developing Various Knowledge Products

A number of templates will be developed for each of the following knowledge products developed through the ALGP. The templates will provide an outline of the length, type of content, structure and format for each respective knowledge product.

The two regional organizations MDP and PDM will take the lead on developing the content of a range of knowledge products, in some cases individually and in others through a collaborative process. These may include case studies, manuals/toolkits, policy briefs, and publications. An ALGP knowledge management team will be established, which includes representatives of FCM, PDM and MDP.

This committee will be responsible for reviewing and finalizing publications before they go to print. Other ALGP partners may also be asked to sit on a review committee as appropriate.

Knowledge products will be shared with ALGP implementing partners, as well as pan African organizations, national and municipal governments, research institutions and financial partners.

### 5.2.1 Case studies

The ALGP intends to document a series of case studies that highlight the experiences and lessons learned from the activities of the ALGP in its four focus countries. Case studies may also explore a particular cross-cutting theme of interest to ALGP implementing partners and other local governance stakeholders, such as gender, HIV/AIDS, etc. More specifically, case studies will contribute to:

- Informing the various ALGP implementing partners and stakeholders of innovative approaches in municipal management and governance;
- Understanding the keys to success in the activities of the ALGP, and sharing the lessons learned.

### 5.2.2 Manuals/Toolkits

Manuals/toolkits will be developed on occasion to facilitate capacity building of national associations, local governments and possibly other ALGP stakeholders in a range of areas relevant to the ALGP (e.g., operational management, advocacy, communications, public consultation, performance measurement, etc.).

Manuals/toolkits produced by the ALGP will share the following common features:

- They will be used for training/practical application as opposed to theoretical
- They will be reference guides for a particular issue or subject
- They will use plain language

### 5.2.3 Policy Briefs

ALGP may produce a number of policy briefs on a given issue related to decentralization and local governance, based on results and lessons learned from ALGP activities or on a particular policy issue of interest to ALGP implementing partners. Policy briefs will seek to inform local government policy makers, central governments, financial partners, researchers and all those interested in decentralization and local governance.

### 5.2.4 Publications

The ALGP may produce a number of research publications based on the experiences and lessons learned from ALGP models and pilots. Publications will be shared with ALGP implementing partners, as well as pan African organizations, national and municipal governments, research institutions and donor countries.

## 5.3 Packaging Information

While all knowledge products, promotional and communications materials developed through the ALGP will be unique in content, they will share a common look and feel in order to be able to clearly associate them with ALGP:

- The logos of both the ALGP and the organization that took the lead in developing a knowledge product will be prominent on the front cover of that knowledge product.
- The back cover of each ALGP knowledge product may include the logos of each ALGP implementing partner on the back cover.
- All ALGP knowledge products and/or communications documents should include the following acknowledgement:  
*The African Local Governance Program (ALGP) is a program to support the decentralization process in Africa. The ALGP gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Fund for Africa for its program and publications.*

- The organization that took the lead on developing a particular knowledge product will hold the copyright for it.
- The inside cover of every knowledge product produced through the ALGP will include a brief description of the program, and will list all implementing partners.

#### 5.4 Printing

The organization that is taking the lead on producing a knowledge product will be responsible for printing the document. In some cases, another organization may assist with the printing of a document should additional resources be required to do so.

#### 5.5 Disseminating Knowledge

Knowledge products developed through the ALGP will be shared with pan African organizations, central and local governments, research and training institutions and funding partners. The key target audiences are identified in Section 4 above – Target Audience.

The lead organization responsible for a particular knowledge product, in collaboration with the ALGP Knowledge Management Team, will develop a specific dissemination strategy for each knowledge product in the early stages of its development.

PDM will be responsible for distributing materials among ALGP implementing partners and key stakeholders in West and Central Africa and MDP in Eastern and Southern Africa. PDM and MDP will also be responsible for disseminating information/knowledge more broadly in their respective regions.

ALGP will also take opportunities to share knowledge/information more broadly in Africa through the new continental organization, CCRA, and through conferences and events such as Africities.

FCM will take responsibility for disseminating knowledge outside of Africa through its international municipal network.

#### 5.6 Storage and Retrieval of information

All knowledge products will be stored electronically on the FCM interactive website and will be accessible to the public. PDM and MDP shall also post electronic versions of documents on their websites.

The organization that took the lead on producing a publication will be responsible for storing hard copies of the documents they produce. Each national and regional implementing partner organization, as well as FCM should request the number of copies they would like to receive prior to the document going to print. Each should maintain an ALGP resource centre with at least one hard copy of each document produced.

#### 5.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Knowledge Management team will monitor and evaluate the knowledge management and communications components of the ALGP as per the monitoring and evaluation framework outlined in the Program Implementation Plan for the ALGP, using the indicators outlined in Section 2 of this document.

#### 6.0 Knowledge Management Units and Their Responsibilities

This section outlines the broad responsibilities of knowledge management and communications at the global, regional and national levels. Note that specific activities are outlined in each implementing partner's annual work plan.

FCM and the two regional partner organizations PDM and MDP will take primary responsibility for implementing the knowledge management strategy.

### 6.1 Global Knowledge Management (FCM)

- Document results for ALGP
- Disseminate knowledge through website
- Disseminate information about communication activity
- Assist with packaging knowledge
- Develop and share knowledge through workshops
- Provide framework/tools for analyzing information around gender/ endemic diseases

### 6.2 Regional Knowledge Management (PDM and MDP)

- Set up communications protocols
- Conduct capacity assessments
- Put in place processes and procedures for knowledge products development
- Set up monitoring system
- Build capacity of national associations in a number of areas (KM, performance monitoring, etc.)
- Hold regional dialogue/conferences
- Facilitate study tours/exchange visits
- Contribute to the regional and continental knowledge sharing (e.g. Africities IV, UCLGA conference in South Africa)
- Put in place processes and procedures for knowledge products development
- Undertake capacity enhancement needs assessment (CENA)
- Facilitate strategy development for managing HIV/AIDS at local government level
- Conduct scans on selected issues (e.g. strategies related to managing HIV/AIDS, gender mainstreaming at local level, innovative practices)
- Implement sessions with local government associations on innovative practices for mainstreaming gender

### 6.3 Knowledge Management Units in National Associations (ALAT, ANAM, AMM, NALAG)

- Contribute to information sharing through e-newsletter
- Monitor and report on project activities
- Share knowledge and communicate with national ALGP stakeholders (central governments, mayors and council, other related organizations, etc.)
- Develop case studies

### 6.4 Joint Knowledge Management Activities

- Design and deliver pan-African and global knowledge sharing workshops (e.g. Africities IV, WUF III)
- Design and develop Joint publications

