

# **USAID Knowledge Management Inventory**

## **Information exchange networks, e-bulletins, e-conferences, virtual library - Environmental Health Project**

1. Describe your knowledge sharing activity - (A) what did you do? (B) why did you do it? (C) what are the results/benefits of the effort?

A - EHP established **information exchange networks** on specific environmental health (EH) topics (e.g., malaria and hygiene networks). There are over 600 members in the malaria network and approximately 120 in the hygiene network. EHP develops **e-bulletins** on malaria and hygiene, and disseminates them bi-weekly to network members.

B - These networks were developed to facilitate information flow and communication among malaria and hygiene researchers and practitioners.

C – Feedback from malaria and hygiene network members have shown that the networks and network bulletins are important mechanisms, especially for developing countries, to stay up to date on research and lessons learned and are also important for facilitating communications among researchers and practitioners (from research to the field).

2. Describe your knowledge sharing activity - (A) what did you do? (B) why did you do it? (C) what are the results/benefits of the effort?

A – EHP conducted **E-conferences** on safe excreta disposal and hygiene improvement framework.

B - The e-conferences were planned and implemented to begin a dialog on EHP methods and approaches for excreta disposal and hygiene improvement.

C – Results – The e-conferences created a foundation for networking and knowledge sharing among researchers and field personnel working in hygiene improvement. EHP was able to build a database of professionals for info sharing and to foster collaborative approaches. The dialogue and the summaries from the e-conferences provided initial background information needed for EHP's operations research on safe excreta disposal.

3. Describe your knowledge sharing activity - (A) what did you do? (B) why did you do it? (C) what are the results/benefits of the effort?

A – The EHP website is used as a major vehicle for knowledge sharing. In addition to web publishing, all EHP reports and products can be accessed from the web. There is also a **web-based virtual library** with links to on-line journals, full text manuals and research reports related to environmental health. An innovative feature, a library web log, is used to frequently update the virtual library and provide links to recent (just published) research and lessons learned related to EH.

B – It was decided that the web site and electronic dissemination were the most effective ways to reach and influence a wide range of audiences.

C -

In December 2001, EHP did an **evaluation of the web site**. Two of the indicators used for the web evaluation were: content (usefulness of content) and outcomes (use of information accessed from the web and how the information was used). Results showed that 68% of the web site visitors accessed the web site for EHP publications and 59% for technical information (multiple answers were accepted). 90% of the survey respondents used the information accessed from the web– the most common usages were for research and writing of other documents, followed by program planning, capacity building (training), and program implementation. The respondents listed their job functions as: program implementation, research, management, consulting, and information/communication.

An additional benefit is the decrease in printing costs and postage costs of mailing print copies since the majority of the publications and information products can be downloaded from the web.

**EHP audience:** USAID, international organizations, environmental health policy makers and programmers in development organizations, NGOs and developing countries

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Electronic documentation link: <http://www.ehproject.org>