

National Recordal System IK holder catalogue process

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AIM OF THE POSTER

The aim of this poster is to illustrate the South African National Recordal Systems (NRS) process whereby Indigenous Knowledge (IK) holder's information is captured in a registry, as specified in South Africa's Indigenous Knowledge Systems Policy, through an IK cataloguing process.

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Indigenous Knowledge Systems Policy was adopted by the South African government in 2004 and laid the platform for the recognition, affirmation, development, and protection of IKS in South Africa. The IKS policy states[1]: "In order to secure rights to knowledge, a recordal system needs to be put in place where communities, guilds and other IK holders can record their knowledge holdings in order to assist their interest in future economic benefits and social good, based on IK."

Subsequently the South African Department of Science and Technology (DST) created a National Indigenous Knowledge Systems Office (NIKSO) that is taking the lead on interfacing IKS with other recognised knowledge holders with the aim to provide critical opportunities for new products and services development.

One of the prioritised responsibilities of NIKSO is to establish a national IK register, whereby IK holders and their knowledge claims can be recorded as part of the NRS.

2. BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITIES

The NRS aims to achieve a number of benefits to a number of stakeholders that ranges from rural communities, general public, government departments, scientists and even international organisations i.e. the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

In particular the benefits, as articulated by the communities themselves, are illustrated in the **Figure 1**:

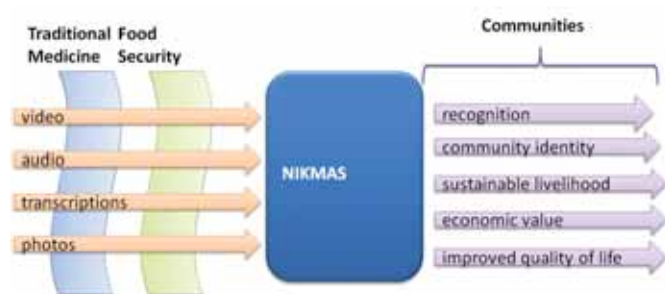


Figure 1: Rural community benefits

3. NRS IK HOLDER CATALOGUE

The catalogue process aims to develop an IK registry that captures IK holder information, their knowledge claims and their location. The catalogue will firstly serve as a register that will identify the knowledge holders and practitioners in various indigenous knowledge fields, and secondly to facilitate recording and documentation of IK for the preservation and protection against unauthorized access to data, for instance commercial exploitation, distortion and fraudulent acts.

The first version of the catalogue process was developed for the Indigenous Knowledge Systems Documentation Centre (IKSDC) located at the University of Zululand and was tested in one of three communities that are linked to this IKSDC.

The IKSDC serves as the local hub for NRS related activities. An IKSDC coordinator and curator will be responsible for coordinating and managing IK activities within the communities, and to ensure relevance and quality of IK data captured, respectively. **Figure 22** illustrates the collaboration between the IKSDC and the community.

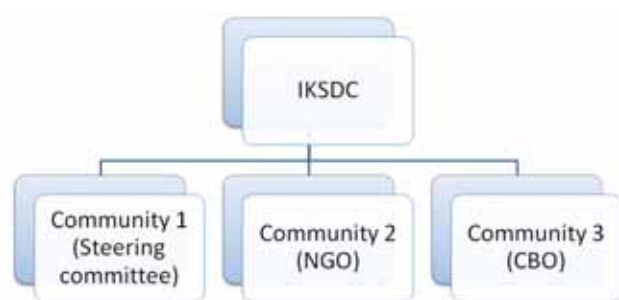


Figure 2: IKSDC and Community organisation

For a community to participate in the NRS initiative the Traditional/Tribal Authority is required to establish a legal entity that represents the community. The ownership of the catalogue process is then transferred to the representative body. It is also possible for a representative body to represent more than one community.

4. THE CATALOGUE PROCESS

The catalogue process was defined to encourage community ownership of the IK activities whilst keeping an active audit trail to protect the communities and IK holders against bio-piracy[2]. The IK audit trail will ensure that IK holders and communities are not locked out of any potential socio- and economic benefits that may flow from their respective IK.

One of the first activities when establishing a new representative body in a community is to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) between the IKSDC and the entity. This NDA ensures confidentiality of all the information collected through the catalogue process. **Figure 3** illustrates the high-level NRS Catalogue process.

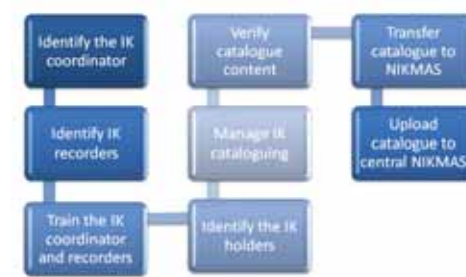


Figure 3: NRS catalogue process

1. Identify IK Coordinator

The first responsibility of the representative body is to appoint an IK community coordinator (IKC). This person will be responsible to coordinate all activities of the IK catalogue process within the community.

2. Identify IK Recorders

The second responsibility of the representative body is to appoint IK recorders (IKRs). The number of IKRs appointed is determined by the size of the community, the number of IK holders identified in the community and finally the funding available.

3. Train the IK Coordinator and Recorders

The third activity will be to train the IKC and IKRs on the catalogue process, the legal aspects and documents that must be signed, the catalogue questionnaire and finally the catalogue IT system (NIKMAS). The training is given by the community's associated IKSDC and NIKSO.

4. Identify IK Holders

The community representative body is responsible for identifying all IK holders in the community that should be catalogued. Allowing the community representative body to identify the IK holders places the ownership and authority of the process back into the community's hands. Due to constraints there may be some IK holders that will not be catalogued, even though they may have valuable IK information.

5. Manage IK cataloguing

The IKC manage the IKRs during the catalogue process. IKRs are appointed to visit specific IK holders to collect the catalogue information. The IKC is responsible for the number, quantity and quality of the questionnaires completed by the IKRs within an agreed time frame.

During the catalogue process two documents are used. The first is a letter of endorsement from the DST/NIKSO confirming the aim of the project and the catalogue process. The second is a Prior Informed Consent (PIC) form that explains the project and the IK holder's role and rights in participating in the project.

6. Verify Catalogue Content.

All questionnaires completed must be presented to the community representative body to verify its content. The representative body decides which information represents the IK data of the community and can be captured in the NIKMAS catalogue system.

7. Transfer Catalogue data to NIKMAS System

The respective IKRs capture all the community verified questionnaires information into a laptop that is assigned a community that hosts a local copy of the NIKMAS catalogue software. In this step in the process the community's representative body signs an Information Transfer Agreement (ITA) acknowledging that the information can be transferred to the IKSDC as per the NDA signed previously.

8. Upload Catalogue content to central system

At the IKSDC the IK that was captured on the community's NIKMAS laptop is transferred to the IKSDC's NIKMAS distributed server, where it will upload new catalogue information periodically to the NIKMAS central server that is hosted at the NIKSO offices. The information is stored centrally to ensure secure access and preservation of the information as well as the responsible management of the information as per the legal documents signed with the community and the IK holder.

5. CONCLUSION

This process was developed to facilitate consistency in creating a registry of IK holders and their respective areas of expertise. It embeds quality and trust into the process so that the registry of IK holders can be used to record and document IK. The audit trail introduced in the process will facilitate responsible exploitation of this knowledge, ultimately for the socio- and / or economic benefit of the IK holder and his/her community.

The NRS IK holder catalogue model is developed as a generic guideline and should be adapted according to the specific IKSDC and community needs and structure whilst keeping the audit trail intact. Future enhancements of the process should consider the use of electronic questionnaires and multi-media to digitally support the IK recorders and facilitate the audit process.

Finally, the catalogue process was developed as part of a Living Lab approach [3] that is being followed on the greater NRS initiative. This process allows active participation of community members in the innovation process and may result in this process evolving as the project participants gain experience and learn from the various communities involved.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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7. REFERENCES

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- [2] Global Exchange. 2001. Biopiracy a new threat to Indigenous Rights and Culture in Mexico.
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