

The Sustainable Development Communications Network, 1996-2001: An Evaluation

**Prepared by Heather Creech, Director, Knowledge Communications
International Institute for Sustainable Development**

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Introduction

From 1996 to 2001, IDRC provided 2 major grants and supplemental funding to the International Institute for Sustainable Development, to support the first and second phases of the project “Spinning the Web” (STW), which evolved into the Sustainable Development Communications Network (SDCN). In the second phase, IDRC requested that IISD undertake an in-house evaluation (self assessment) of the project.

The self assessment approach to evaluation is an internally guided and controlled process, using an agreed performance framework, questions and a facilitated process. We developed a performance framework from a combination of the following:

Methodology	
Modified outcome mapping	<p>We customized a planning framework to capture the vision, objectives, partners, related stakeholders, desired activities and outcomes as reflected in the original project proposals, governance agreement, and reports of partner meetings.</p> <p>We customized an evaluation framework to capture the actual outputs and outcomes of the project.</p>
Logical Framework Analysis	<p>An LFA was prepared as part of developing the STW Phase 2 proposal to CIDA. Selected indicators of success identified at the time have been included in the modified outcome mapping frameworks¹.</p>
Appreciative Inquiry	<p>Stories are a key element in demonstrating outcomes. We used an Appreciative Inquiry approach in designing questions for e-consultations and interviews with members, to elicit their stories.</p> <p>AI questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Describe the best 2 (3 at the most) experiences you had with the SDCN: when did you feel most excited about the network; when did you feel you accomplished something valuable as a result of being part of the network? b) What did you value the most about the SDCN? What do you think you learned or gained from being part of the SDCN? c) What do you feel you contributed to the rest of the network? <p>We also drew stories from meeting reports and reports of interns placed with members and others involved in the project.</p>

¹ The original LFA was prepared to accompany a multi-million dollar, 3 year proposal to CIDA. A two-year, \$300,000 grant was awarded; consequently not all of the goals, outcomes and outputs in the LFA were retained in the revised proposal.

While this was a consultative process, it was not a collaborative process. The evaluation of outcomes, conclusions and recommendations are those of IISD, based on consultations with members, related correspondence and five years of network documentation. The evaluation report has been made available to members on the network extranet. The conclusions and recommendations have been circulated to members and will form the basis for the next virtual meeting of the members, in April 2002.

Sources of information

1. Open e-consultation with founding members, using the Appreciative Inquiry approach
2. One on one interviews with selected members
3. Documentation, as follows [Documents marked with an * are attached in Network Document Appendices]:
 - a. Core project proposals, phase 1 and 2 (IDRC and CIDA)*
 - b. Supplementary project proposals, phase 1 and 2
 - i. DFAIT, CIDA, HRDC internship proposals, 1997-2002
 - ii. Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) youth consultations (for GKP Action Plan and G8 digital divide consultations)
 - iii. CIDA -- Sustainable Development Web Communications Initiative
 - c. Vision statements for STW from members, Phase 1 *
 - d. Logical Framework Analysis from original CIDA Phase 2 proposal *
 - e. Minutes from members meetings
 - f. SDCN current governance agreement *
 - g. Final report to IDRC, phase 1 *
 - h. Draft final reports to IDRC, CIDA phase 2 (to be forwarded to the respective funders separately)
 - i. Selected intern and host organization reports
 - i. Development Alternatives (DA)
 - ii. Environnement et développement du tiers-monde (ENDA)
 - iii. Fundacion Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN)
 - iv. Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)
 - v. Earth Council (EC)
 - vi. Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)
 - vii. International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
 - viii. Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP)
 - j. Tomorrow magazine's review of the SD Gateway (April 2001)*
 - k. Selected email correspondence, 1996-2001
4. Working papers [attached in Working Paper Appendices]
 - a. Tools for assessing web site usage
 - b. Measuring while you manage: planning and evaluating knowledge networks

The evaluation process was led by Heather Creech. Ms. Creech was trained in Outcome mapping by the IDRC Evaluation Unit in February 2001, in preparation for this evaluation. Terri Willard, Network Coordinator, provided the documentation and validated the metrics of outputs.

Background to Spinning the Web

Spinning the Web (STW) began as a partnership project with seven leading sustainable development organizations: five based in developing and transitional countries and two based in the north. STW was an experiment on how we might use technology to get more information from the south onto the net. Efforts in the first two to three years were focused on working together to better understand how to use the web medium, including building the capacity of all members to expand their websites to communicate the knowledge of their respective institutions. Interns played an important role in facilitating this process. The SD Gateway was created to integrate the partner knowledge bases, and to provide a central navigation point, in English, French and Spanish, to sustainable development knowledge, in particular knowledge coming from the south.

Members

As the relationships with the founding partners matured, the project evolved into the Sustainable Development Communications Network (SDCN). During the second two year phase, it was decided that the membership should be expanded in order to increase representation from other regions of the world. New partners with complementary technical and substantive expertise were also needed to enrich the activities of the network. At the same time, the network wanted to ensure that new members understood that this was a working network, not just an information exchange network. The following accommodations were made. Three categories of network membership were created for organizations depending on the length and intensity of their working relationships with other network members:

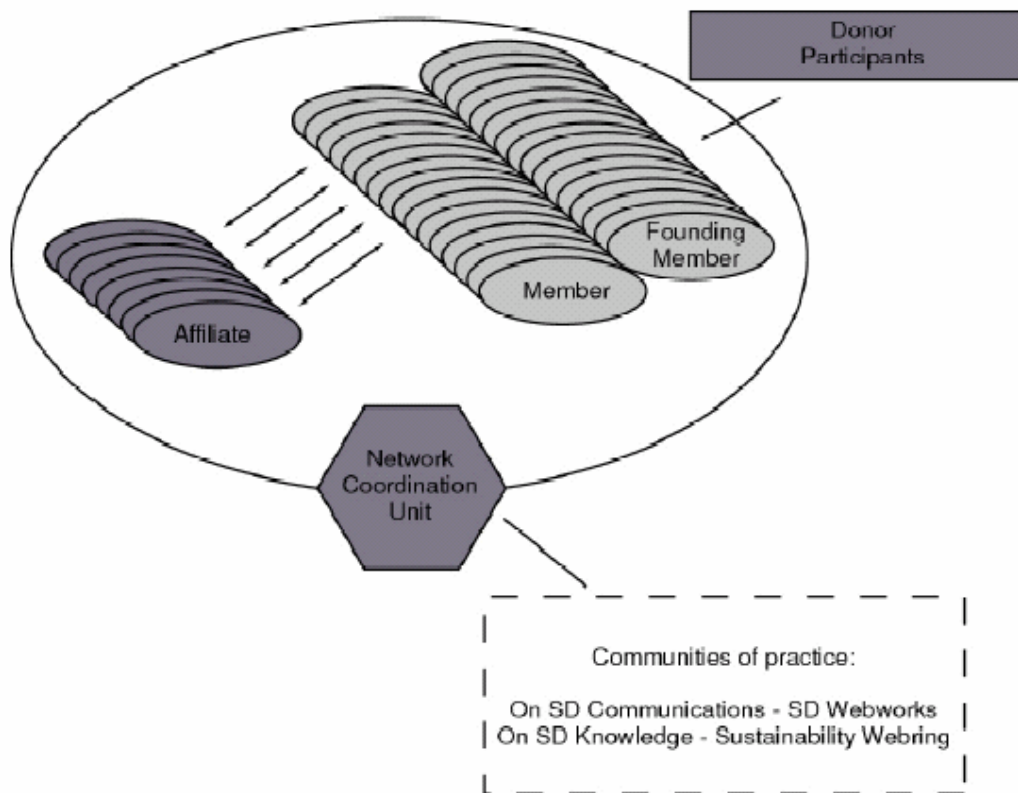
- Founding members: the seven organizations that have been involved in the network since 1996; oversee network vision and objectives
 - Development Alternatives (DA)
 - Environnement et développement du tiers-monde (ENDA)
 - Fundacion Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN)
 - Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)
 - Earth Council (EC)
 - Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)
 - International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
- Members: civil society organizations that have been active in two or more network projects over the past two years.
 - Population and Community Development Association, Thailand (PDA)
 - Institute for Sustainable Development, Poland (ISD-Poland)
 - Fundacion Futuro Latinoamericano, Ecuador (FFLA)
 - EcoNews Africa, Kenya
- Affiliate members: Affiliate members include other organizations that are approached by an SDCN member to participate in a single network project, or that approach the SDCN with a project idea of interest to at least one founding member. These members retain their affiliation with the network only for the duration of the project.

- Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA), Philippines
- Fundación Acceso, Costa Rica
- MekongInfo, Vietnam

The Sustainability Webring and SD Webworks provide the means for connection and interaction with organizations outside of the core membership. The Webring is an Internet tool that allows users to navigate easily between organizational Web sites that deal with the principles, policies, and best practices for sustainable development. At the present time, 181 organizations have joined the Webring. The SD Webworks provides an online discussion forum on best practices in web communications for sustainable development, together with training materials and case studies. 330 individuals participate in the SD Webworks.

Donors are also considered to be members of the SDCN, and are encouraged to learn from SDCN experiences.

SDCN relationships diagram, phase 2



Network Activities

In addition to general information sharing and support activities, the SDCN undertakes two types of activities focused on external audiences: substantive projects and capacity-building projects.

1. Substantive activities

Substantive activities focus on specific sustainable development issues. These projects aim to inform sustainable development decision-makers within governments, industries and communities about alternative policies and practices that have been developed around the world. They involve collaborative research and communications by two or more network members. Examples include online modules on water management, sustainable livelihoods, and sustainable cities.

2. Capacity-building activities

Capacity-building activities allow network members to share with other sustainable development organizations what they have learned about communications through their participation in substantive projects. Capacity building can involve workshops, distributed learning, peer mentoring and consulting arrangements. Examples include the SD Webworks online community and presentations at Global Knowledge Partnership events.

Network financial resources, management and monitoring

In addition to the support from IDRC, IISD provided financial contributions to both phase 1 and phase 2 activities. In phase 2, a major grant was secured from CIDA, with a second grant provided for specific training work. The World Bank Institute also supported a number of activities which came under the umbrella of the SDCN, via the Global Development Network (for training), and the Global Knowledge Partnership (for travel of southern members to GKP meetings; and for IISD's work on including youth in ICT policy and planning). Interns provided to SDCN members were funded through Canada's Youth Employment Strategy, with grants from DFAIT, CIDA and HRDC. All network members provided additional financial support directly to their interns. The Earth Council and ENDA provided support for hosting network meetings in Costa Rica and Senegal. The Regional Environment Center sourced additional grant funding for its SDCN project on cities; SEI funding for Hanover 2000 was used to engage SDCN input to its Global Dialogue 1.

A Governance Agreement, signed by all members, provides the vision, objectives, roles and responsibilities, and the decision making mechanisms for the Network. An annual face to face meeting of the members is preferred. Five of these have taken place since 1996. Several virtual meetings and consultations have been held in lieu of a face to face meeting. Members that receive funding for projects from grants administered by IISD, must sign contracts and provide deliverables and financial reporting to IISD. Members that host interns to work on SDCN related projects must sign a three party contract with IISD, themselves and the intern. Both interns and host organizations are required to submit substantive and financial reports at the conclusion of the internships. A Network Coordination Unit (NCU), housed at IISD, performs the secretariat functions for the network, including monitoring of network activities.

Monitoring stages

Phase 1, 1996-1998	Interim evaluation mission (primarily dealing with assessing web traffic on member sites) Network meetings Intern reports Final reports to funders, Phase 1
Phase 2 1998-2001	Network meetings Intern reports Final reports to funders, Phase 2

An extranet has been in operation for several years. It holds the archive of all the core network documentation and the closed listserv for member communications.

Foundation research for the SDCN Evaluation

Throughout both phases of Spinning the Web, we were aware of the scarcity of information on how to evaluate networks (as opposed to individual projects or organizations) and in particular, how to evaluate the electronic communications component of this particular network.

We therefore undertook two additional pieces of research related to evaluation:

1. Web site use

We needed to develop some simple tools and guidelines for evaluating website usage. A detailed assessment of the SD Gateway was carried out and published in 2000, using guidelines we published in the working paper “Tools for assessing web site usage”, by Anderson et al.

For this evaluation, we have chosen the following indicators to assess the web communications products that were among the principal deliverables of the SDCN:

- page requests (as a rough equivalent to amount of information used);
- key words used in search engines that led to the site (as a rough indication of information needs of users)
- PDF file downloads and subscriptions to mail lists with web archives (as an indication of interest in specific content).
- User assessment

We also added ranking in the Google search engine as an indication of the level of interest of external stakeholders in the SD Gateway.

We have been deliberate in not placing too much emphasis on web traffic analysis, for reasons which are adequately covered in the working paper [attached in the Working Paper Appendices].

2. A Network Evaluation Framework

We had to develop a simple framework for network evaluation, that we could then apply to other networks either hosted by IISD or in which IISD is an active member.

We believe that networks need to be evaluated on two fronts.

1. The effectiveness of the network (doing the right thing)

In a network supported by a single major grant, there is a certain cohesiveness of objectives which makes it somewhat easier to monitor how the network is building capacity, creating joint value and influencing policy processes. This becomes much more difficult when the network is supported by a variety of grants for a variety of projects within the network (as has been the case in the last 2 years of the SDCN). Nevertheless, in both cases it is necessary to find the means to demonstrate the value added of the network modality, for three reasons:

- a) Formal knowledge networks come together to lever change in policies and practices, supportive of sustainable development. A network needs to be able to determine what changes it has effected through its research and communications work. It needs to monitor whether it is fully realizing its “network advantage”. This requires a methodology that not only assesses individual activities, but provides some means for identifying changes as a result of its combination of efforts.
- b) Value added propositions – ones which demonstrate real leverage of money and influence -- are highly attractive to funders. Networks need to be able to make the case that operating in a network mode does lead to focused collaboration, better informed research results, new knowledge and real influence.
- c) Networks often require a great deal of in-kind support from member institutions, especially during gaps in specific project funding. The network coordinators need to be able to demonstrate to the members whether it is worth the additional investment of time and effort in order to sustain network momentum over the long term.

2. The efficiency of the network (doing things right)

This point is often overlooked in traditional evaluation frameworks, and yet over and over we hear about the transactional costs of networks, that they are cumbersome and time-consuming to manage, that motivation and performance of individual members is often at issue and that the cost effectiveness of the network approach is in question.

As part of our work on evaluation, we therefore undertook a review of available project planning and evaluation methodologies.

- a. SWOT analysis [Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats]
- b. Results Based Management
- c. Logical Framework Analysis
- d. Outcome mapping
- e. Appreciative inquiry
- f. Human resources performance evaluation

We took elements from each of these and developed a set of frameworks for use in planning and evaluation of networks:

- a. a planning framework
- b. a monitoring framework
- c. an annual evaluation framework and an end of grant evaluation framework, to be used to aggregate information to report to donors

At the heart of our approach is the focus on outcomes as changes in behaviour, activities and relationships. There are two groups that will be changed or influenced by their interaction with a network and its work program(s):

- a) the network members themselves, demonstrating
 - o Changes in individual member activities as an outcome of network participation
 - o Progressive levels of interaction among network members
 - o Progressive levels of effort to engage the stakeholders each member wishes to influence
- b) the stakeholders: those individuals and groups outside of the network that the network wants to influence; those who should have a vested interest in the work of the network, with the ability to act or to influence others to act.

At its simplest, a network planning and evaluation framework seeks answers to the following questions:

- what will success look like for the network as a whole;
- is the network advantage being realized
 - o influencing policy processes and practices (leveraging change)
 - o joint value creation
 - o capacity development
- for each activity, who is going to benefit, be changed or influenced by the work (both members and stakeholders);
- what will be the indicators of success for each activity?
- has the network operated efficiently? Have the transactional costs of working in multiple relationships with members been mitigated through good work planning, financial and human resources management practices?

The frameworks we prepared for the SDCN evaluation have been adapted from our working paper on the evaluation of networks. An explanation for the elements in each framework has been attached in the Prototype Planning and Evaluation Framework Appendices. “Measuring

while you manage” is included in the Working Paper Appendices. Once we designed these frameworks, we were then able to apply the relevant components to the evaluation of the SDCN.

Evaluation of the SDCN

Final reports for the major grants contributed by IDRC and CIDA have been prepared, and include the record of specific deliverables against project grant objectives. This evaluation focuses more specifically on the SDCN itself, what the vision of the members has been, the network objectives and outcomes from our collaboration. Throughout the evaluation, we assess where the SDCN sits within the constellation of information networks, ICT training, and SD organizations.

Objectives for the Evaluation

- Assessment of network effectiveness:
 - did we do the right things? Did we realize our “network advantage”?
- Assessment of network efficiency:
 - did we do things right? Were we able to mitigate the transactional costs of working in multiple relationships with members through good work planning, financial and human resources management practices?
- Mapping of outcomes, both expected and unexpected
- Locating the energy in the SDCN
 - to determine what to build on for the future
 - to identify where collaboration is needed with other organizations and networks.

We have recast the “nuts and bolts” of the SDCN into our Network planning sheets out of the original project proposals, vision statements from members at the start of Phase 1, the Logical Framework Analysis prepared for CIDA for Phase 2, and the Network Governance Agreement.

We have not attempted to recreate “progress journals”. Formal monitoring of the network took place on average twice a year, through the intern reports and the annual members’ meeting. Data, including stories from members and stakeholders, have been drawn from intern reports and meeting minutes, final reports to funders for phases 1 and 2, and the Appreciative Inquiry consultation with members. The data have been presented in the Network evaluation sheets.

Network Effectiveness (Doing the right thing)

Planning sheet: Vision and objectives

<p>Vision</p>	<p>The Sustainable Development Communications Network (SDCN) is a global network of leading sustainable development organizations, seeking to accelerate the implementation of sustainable development through broader, integrated information and communications about what we know. [from the SDCN Governance Agreement]</p> <p>In initiating and championing the SDCN, IISD wishes to contribute to the creation of a new model of international co-operation and development based on knowledge sharing. [From the IDRC project proposals]</p>											
<p>Step 1: What were we going to do?</p>	<p>Network objectives and major programs of work</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="459 625 1904 1133"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="459 625 1184 654">Network objectives [from the Governance Agreement]</th> <th data-bbox="1184 625 1904 654">Major work programs</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 654 1184 784"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undertake joint communication activities to inform broader audiences about sustainable development. To inform each other about SD research and action underway within each organization. </td> <td data-bbox="1184 654 1904 784">SD Gateway and related SD knowledge products</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 784 1184 878"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build capacity among Members to communicate sustainable development through new communications technologies </td> <td data-bbox="1184 784 1904 878">Member capacity development</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 878 1184 1037"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a forum for Network Members to share experiences in the management of sustainable development communications To broadly share the knowledge about how to use ICTs efficiently and effectively. </td> <td data-bbox="1184 878 1904 1037">Capacity development for civil society organizations</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 1037 1184 1133"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To experiment with new communications technologies and to develop methods for their seamless integration with existing communications technologies. </td> <td data-bbox="1184 1037 1904 1133">Research and demonstration project on integrated communications approaches</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Network objectives [from the Governance Agreement]	Major work programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undertake joint communication activities to inform broader audiences about sustainable development. To inform each other about SD research and action underway within each organization. 	SD Gateway and related SD knowledge products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build capacity among Members to communicate sustainable development through new communications technologies 	Member capacity development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a forum for Network Members to share experiences in the management of sustainable development communications To broadly share the knowledge about how to use ICTs efficiently and effectively. 	Capacity development for civil society organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To experiment with new communications technologies and to develop methods for their seamless integration with existing communications technologies. 	Research and demonstration project on integrated communications approaches
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Planning sheet: SD Gateway and related SD knowledge products

<i>For Work program 1</i>	SD Gateway and related SD knowledge products		
Step 2: Who did we want to influence or change?	a) Members: IISD, SEI, Earth Council, REC, FARN, ENDA, DA b) Stakeholders: in general, users of SD knowledge (researchers, bureaucrats, students, media); SD organizations outside of the core SDCN membership seeking means to profile their research, information		
Step 3: How were we going to effect those changes?	Work plan Activities and Outputs Specific activities to meet objectives; metrics of deliverables	Anticipated Outcomes : Network members Assessing change in behaviour, relationships, activities in network members	Anticipated Outcomes: Stakeholder group Assessing change in behaviour, relationships, activities of parties targeted by network members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SD Gateway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # links, emphasis on southern /transitional country knowledge • analysis of web traffic to the Gateway • user feedback • In depth module development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of modules created • Use of modules on the Gateway • Sustainability Webring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of organizations in the webring, with good representation from the south/transitional countries • SDCN Announces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of subscribers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members voluntarily posting links to SD Gateway (SD Gateway jointly maintained by all members) • Joint participation in the preparation of the modules; modules demonstrating both the convergence and divergence of views of members • In preparing the modules, both research and communications staff of member organizations participate • Members develop additional collaborative research and/or communications projects • Members sharing information about current research, new products via SDCN Announces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased visibility of Southern perspectives of sustainable development on the World Wide Web 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad audiences are aware of and utilize the Network's Internet products • Users seeking further information from network members • Requests for partnerships with other network, gateway, portal site providers • Requests to post information on the SD Gateway

Evaluation Sheet: SD Gateway and related SD knowledge products

Level of success: 1-did not meet expectations; 2-met expectations; 3-exceeded expectations

Work program 1: SD Gateway and related SD knowledge products		
Activities; Cumulative Outputs	Level of success	Indicators
SD Gateway	3	<p>The SD Gateway, at http://sdgateway.net, is updated bimonthly by the Network Coordination Unit at IISD. Over 50% of the content in the SD In-depth and SD Topics sections originates from the southern/transitional country members.</p> <p>A detailed assessment of the Gateway was published in 2000, in the working paper “Tools for assessing web site usage” [see Working Paper Appendices]. Over the past year, traffic on the SDGateway has doubled, with an average in the fall of close to 80,000 pages per month downloaded. The SD Gateway is currently the #11 site retrieved by Google, using the keywords sustainable development. This reflects not only good metatagging on our part, but the number of organizations around the world that have linked to the SD Gateway.</p> <p>Very little user feedback on the SD Gateway is received. User testing was carried out as part of the assessment for the working paper. Revisions to the Gateway were carried out in response. The site has not been substantially changed since then.</p> <p>An independent evaluation was conducted by Tomorrow Magazine in April 2001. The reviewers declared the SD Gateway to be the top SD portal on the Internet. The review is attached in the Network Documents Appendices.</p> <p>On gender issues: The Gateway directs users to sustainability initiatives that have been developed by women, as well as those that build their capacity to participate at all levels of decision-making. The Sustainable Livelihoods module is particularly good at bringing forward the voices of women.</p>
Joint modules	2	<p>All modules agreed to in Phase 1 and 2 have been completed. They are online, but they have not yet been linked into the “SD In-depth” section of the SD Gateway (this will be completed by April 2002).</p> <p>The Introduction to SD, which represents both the convergence and divergence of founding member views on global sustainability, is the most popular module, according to our web traffic analysis.</p>
SD Webring	3	<p>Requests to join the Webring are screened by the NCU against stringent criteria. Consequently the Webring, combined with the SD Gateway, provides one of the best access points to SD knowledge on the Internet.</p> <p>181 organizations have joined; 10% representation from the south.</p>

SDCN Announces	1	Listserv established to promote publications, events etc. from the members of the SDCN to each other and to broader audiences.
<p>Cumulative Outcomes: Network members</p>		<p>As anticipated, the SD Gateway and Webring provide increased visibility of developing/transitional country SD perspectives. Members have commented on the utility of the Gateway providing access to their work.</p> <p>The NCU has observed that the joint module development was cumbersome and at times unsatisfactory in terms of process. We might have set the level of success for this initiative at 1-2, but it turns out, during the Appreciative Inquiry process, that most members actually got a great deal out of the joint module development process. Much to our surprise, members involved in joint module development all commented that while they found the process of collaboration challenging, they learned a great deal both in terms of converging and diverging views on sustainability issues, and in terms of how to carry out joint communications projects. They are more aware of the knowledge and expertise held by other members in the network.</p> <p>However, while joint value aggregation and creation have taken place with the SD Gateway and the in-depth modules, it has been effected only through the planning and funding provided through the NCU. At present, only FARN voluntarily adds content to the SD Gateway. Only EC and DA mentioned ideas for new joint projects, but to date neither have taken the next step to draft concept papers and funding strategies. Interns have noted that at times the joint communications efforts seem forced, and that some member organizations would rather use funding to continue to improve their own communications products than work on integrating communications products.</p> <p>One of the desired outcomes was that the joint module work would serve to bring the research staff of member institutions into more contact with the research and communications staff of other members, and would strengthen their understanding of the role of communications in sustainable development. Only two members were successful at bringing their research staff into the joint module process.</p> <p>The lack of attention to gender issues in some modules in part reflects the lack of engagement of research staff in the production of those modules. This flags an interesting issue in capacity development for communications professionals: how much training is required in the substantive, cross cutting issues of their organizations so they can ensure the knowledge of their organizations is adequately presented, and knowledge gaps are addressed? Are there key issues that they always need to watch for, as they prepare the knowledge of their organizations for delivery?</p> <p>Members rarely share information about current research and new products via SDCN announces.</p>
<p>Stories: members</p>		<p>The Earth Council values the SD Gateway for its holistic approach to sustainable development (in contrast to other directories, gateways and portal sites which focus on environment, or development, or social justice issues). The Gateway provides them with the means to demonstrate that while they may have chosen not to work on a particular issue or in a particular area, they have partners who do, who complement the Earth Council's work.</p> <p>REC believes that we achieved our desire for "two way information flows" through this work. DA believes that through the modules we</p>

	<p>have collated information “in such a way that it is enriched by a global perspective”. FARN was able to profile its work on Public Participation. Finding that REC shared FARN’s view of the importance of public access to environmental laws led to the EcoLegis project.</p> <p>REC “found the creation of the online module on sustainable cities rather interesting: virtual players all around the world all working to quite a large and visible result...as part of the “virtual” networking (with real results) the peak was definitely the online module.”</p> <p>DA was pleased that even though only REC and DA contributed extensively to the module on water management, they were able to reflect a balance of views across the network: “the module in no way shows a bias only for South Asian case studies”.</p> <p>ENDA has commented many times that they would like the SDCN to take positions on substantive issues, demonstrating a convergence of organizations’ views on key issues such as trade. However, the work on joint modules has demonstrated that in fact there is little homogeneity of views within the SDCN membership – complementary views certainly, but not necessarily uniform views necessary for advocacy positions.</p> <p>EC had some interest in exploring linking the National Councils for Sustainable Development (NCSO) directories with REC’s directories of Eastern Europe organizations; and for linking the sustainable cities/communities work with the NCSO. However the REC supporter of this idea left REC, and no further work was done to develop the idea into a proposal for funding.</p> <p>Based on the joint module experience, DA is looking for other ideas to collaborate, in particular with regional stakeholders TERI and ICIMOD. However, a funding proposal has not yet emerged.</p> <p>SEI has valued the SDCN as a means to promote SEI’s work to the other members, and to learn about work going on in member organizations. SEI sees the SDCN as a vehicle to market the member organizations and to involve other professionals and networks.</p>
<p>Cumulative Outcomes: Stakeholder Group</p>	<p>Web traffic analysis and the Tomorrow magazine review demonstrate that we are reaching broad audiences with the SDCN knowledge products. The requests to join the Webring indicate stakeholder interest in the SDCN, and recognition that there is an advantage to being affiliated with the SDCN.</p> <p>Both DA and FARN have noted that they are receiving requests for information as a direct result of the knowledge products created through SDCN.</p> <p>Other major information systems, gateways and portals have approached the SDCN for collaboration and integration. MIT has invited the SDCN to make presentations at meetings of the GSSD project; members were able to make interventions to the World Bank on the Development Gateway based on their experience with the SD Gateway; discussions are ongoing with the Development Gateway, to act as a thematic section of the Development Gateway; there is considerable interest with IIED’s RING (Regional and International Networking Group) to use the SD Gateway as a communications vehicle for the knowledge bases of RING members. ELDIS (IDS at the University of Sussex) is the only major system with which we have not established some level of engagement.</p>

	<p>A relationship with OneWorld is discussed under the capacity development work program #3 below.</p> <p>Because of IISD's work in general on knowledge networks, we have been successful at joining IIED's research partnerships initiative, in collaboration with the RING. We will be leading a component on integrating the research and communications process. While this may have been a gap in the SDCN outcomes, our lessons learned will strengthen the contribution to be made to the RING.</p>
Stories: Stakeholders	<p>IUCN Pakistan informed us that they found the Gateway extremely useful, because it reduced the amount of time they needed to spend online to find key sustainable development information. This has meant real savings to them, given their costs for Internet access.</p> <p>The Development Gateway approached IISD (based on its SD knowledge and its hosting of the SDCN) to be considered for the Gateway editorial committee. No appointments to the committee have been made at the time of writing.</p>
Unexpected	<p>The establishment of the Development Gateway initially appeared to jeopardize the niche for the SD Gateway. Development and expansion plans for the SD Gateway were slowed down in response. Maintenance of the SD Gateway has become in part a "critical mass" issue: the Development Gateway draws on the extensive resources (staffing and financial) of the World Bank; ELDIS draws on the graduate student labour pool of the Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex.</p>
Adjustments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The SD Gateway and related products promoting the SD knowledge within the network will need a different support mechanism. While members value them, they are of secondary interest. While there is no cost to members to post links on the Gateway, or notices to SDCN Announces, we do not expect that they will integrate those efforts into their daily marketing / information sharing activities. b) Some attention should be paid to training in cross cutting concerns (gender in particular) as part of the capacity development for communications professionals. c) We are currently seeking funding through WSSD initiatives that will allow us to update and expand a number of SD knowledge products on the SD Gateway. d) Given the stronger interest from stakeholders in the SD Gateway (in comparison to members), the NCU will explore collaboration with other networks and systems, in particular the RING, as a means to maintain the niche and growth for the SD Gateway and related products. e) The critical mass of resources behind other gateways/portals will not be an issue if the SD Gateway keeps a narrow, very selective focus on its content, so that it can be maintained with minimal investment. f) Unless members themselves bring collaborative communications ideas forward together with proposals for funding, efforts to create joint communications products should be discontinued in the next phase of the SDCN.

Planning sheet: Member capacity development

For Work program 2	Member capacity development		
Step 2: Who did we want to influence or change?	a) Members: REC, FARN, ENDA, DA, EcoNews Africa, PDA, ISD Poland, FFLA [note: these members received funds from the SDCN in phase 1 and 2 specifically for putting their organizational knowledge bases online] b) Stakeholders: None		
Step 3: How were we going to effect those changes?	Work plan Activities and Outputs Specific activities to meet objectives; metrics of deliverables	Anticipated Outcomes : Network members Assessing change in behaviour, relationships, activities in network members	Anticipated Outcomes: Stakeholder group Assessing change in behaviour, relationships, activities of parties targeted by network members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member website development (advice, technical assistance, peer review of web products) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project funds used for staff time, consultants to upgrade websites • # new or upgraded organizational websites, or significant changes or additions to organizational websites • Improved use of web traffic analysis • Intern support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # interns placed with members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved functionality and navigation of member websites • Increased content on member websites • Increased institutional and human capacity to work with the Internet • Members establish communications policies and procedures that designate significant portions of their knowledge bases for international public access on the Internet. • Members have successfully implemented models of two-way regional information flows 	

Evaluation sheet: Member capacity development

Work program 2: Capacity development for Members		
Activities; Cumulative Outputs	Level of success	Indicators
Member website development	2	<p>New websites established: FARN, ISD Poland, PDA Old websites replaced with new, expanded versions: ENDA, DA Website architecture and navigation improved: REC</p> <p>Guidelines have been prepared by the NCU and shared with members on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listserv and e-conference management • Tools for measuring web site use • Communicating SD on the web <p>An informal “help” desk was provided by the NCU in phase 1 and the first part of phase 2, largely for technical support.</p>
Intern support	3	<p>From 1997 to 2001, 25 interns were placed with various network members. The NCU trained the interns in web communications practices prior to sending them to their host organizations. Interns provided a range of support services for members, from assistance with html coding to get the core knowledge up on the Web, to training staff in web maintenance, to assistance with database and other information gathering and processing projects.</p>
Cumulative Outcomes: Network members		<p>In all cases, members involved in this work program have been able to increase the amount of content on their respective websites as a direct result of SDCN support, through financial contributions from the SDCN grants, through advice from the NCU, and through intern support. Design and navigation have improved on a number of sites. Most important, however, all members in this work program have moved beyond the typical “brochure ware” sites to the delivery of substance, reflecting a change or commitment in institutional policies to the delivery of knowledge for international access.</p> <p>The “help desk” function of the NCU was discontinued in phase 2, largely due to the decreased demand for information and assistance with technical issues (equipment, software, connectivity, management questions). We see this decreased demand as an outcome of successful capacity development of members.</p> <p>An attempt was made to strengthen regional capacity by “twinning” founding members with new members in their region: REC with ISD Poland; ENDA with Econews Africa; FARN with FFLA; and DA with PDA Thailand. While the new members benefited from the financial support and advice (the output level), we do not feel we achieved the outcome, that there would be stronger exchanges and aggregation of regional content as a result. As we observed under work program 1, members are primarily concerned with building their</p>

	<p>own capacity to get their institutional knowledge bases online, rather than attempting the next level of aggregation of knowledge.</p> <p>While the joint modules projects were intended to increase the richness of SD knowledge on the Internet, they had a related, unexpected outcome: most members commented on how the collaboration reinforced their ability to work virtually with others. This signals a need for more support and “learning by doing” opportunities for virtual collaboration.</p> <p>All members have commented either through the Appreciative Inquiry process or through their reports on interns, how important the interns have been to the SDCN. In many respects, they have acted as the “glue” for the network, providing both the necessary staff assistance in getting the members on the web, and in connecting the members with the NCU.</p>
Stories: members	<p>ENDA has commented in the past that they have learned through the SDCN more about institutional policies and procedures necessary for maintaining web sites.</p> <p>DA felt the interaction with PDA was very fruitful at first, in that DAINET was able to share its experiences with PDA, however illness in the point person at PDA disrupted the continuity of the work.</p> <p>REC was very disappointed in the performance of their “twin”, the Institute for Sustainable Development, Poland. As a result of ISD’s poor performance, the final payment to ISD was withheld.</p> <p>ENDA and EcoNews focused on a review of Internet access in Africa as the starting point for strengthening their collaboration on the communication of SD issues in the region; however no additional projects and work plans have been forthcoming.</p> <p>FARN’s relationship with FFLA was perhaps the most successful of the “twinning” exercises; they believe they promoted the growth of the SDCN through the inclusion of FFLA.</p> <p>FFLA valued what they received from the SDCN in terms of capacity development, but felt they should have contributed more in turn but were unclear how to do so.</p>
Cumulative Outcomes: Stakeholder Group	<p>While there were no stakeholders explicitly identified for this work program, the need for capacity development on electronic communications was taken up by other IISD-hosted networks. In particular, the Trade Knowledge Network conducted technical reviews of members in advance of beginning the TKN research activities, in order to ensure that members had the tools, or could get the support through interns or other methods, to be able to work together virtually.</p> <p>Members not directly involved in this work program (EC, SEI) also noted benefits from the discussions and exchanges of technical advice, especially in Phase 1. EC appreciated the informal advice provided by IISD’s systems manager; SEI also (early in Phase 1) had discussions with IISD’s systems manager. EC in particular commented that the email discussions and debates at members’ meetings helped to validate some of their communications approaches. EC hosted the DA website for several years, and learned much through trial and error from that experience. IISD learned how to develop web products that could be accessed in developing countries (formats, download times, etc.)</p>

	The experience of working on the joint modules was sufficiently rich that IISD chose to document it for external audiences in the working paper “Helping Knowledge Networks Work” (published as chapter 5 in the book Strategic Intentions).
Stories: Stakeholders	
Unexpected	
Adjustments	Every organization, whether in developed, developing or transitional countries, continues to need financial support to meet the costs of delivering knowledge on the web. We believe at this point in time that it is more appropriate to put resources into training for effective use of the medium, for good web planning and management practices, and for virtual collaboration. As organizations come to a better understanding of integrated communications and engagement strategies, they will begin to include communications lines in project budgets that will be more robust and will cover the web development costs.

Planning sheet: Capacity development for civil society organizations

<i>For Work Program 3</i>	Capacity Development for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)		
Step 2: Who did we want to influence or change?	a) Members: IISD, ENDA, DA, REC, FARN, Earth Council, Mekong Info, Foundation for Media Alternatives, Acceso b) Stakeholders: CSOs in developing and transitional countries seeking to improve their web communications; CSOs involved in ICT training; IGOs, SDCN donor group seeking advice on web communications		
Step 3: How were we going to effect those changes?	Work plan Activities and Outputs Specific activities to meet objectives; metrics of deliverables	Anticipated Outcomes : Network members Assessing change in behaviour, relationships, activities in network members	Anticipated Outcomes: Stakeholder group Assessing change in behaviour, relationships, activities of parties targeted by network members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer mentoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creation of SD Webworks • # of participants in the discussion list • Distributed learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # case studies, tools developed for the SD Webworks • Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # held, # of participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation in SD Webworks, sharing their experiences and asking for advice • Contributing case studies of their web practices • Sharing their experience through workshops organized by SDCN • Sharing their experience in other venues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of interaction on SD Webworks • Level of representation from the south • New members joining the SDCN • Partnership requests with other training groups • Consulting requests from CSOs, IGOs

Evaluation sheet: Capacity development for civil society organizations

Work program 3: Capacity Building for Civil Society Organizations		
Activities; Cumulative Outputs	Level of success	Indicators
Peer mentoring	3	330 participants in the SDWebworks discussion list; 25% representation from the south/transitional countries. Web reviews carried out by 6 members for 20 organizations in 13 countries, at the request of those organizations.
Distributed learning	3	Tools initially developed for SDCN members (listserv management, tools for assessing website use, etc.) have been shared with SD Webworks. Most recently, a web review guide was prepared so that users could undertake self assessments of their websites. Website at http://sdgateway.net/webworks/management/default.htm holds tips, articles and 14 case studies from SDCN members on site management, information architecture, design, advanced features. Articles were prepared by NCU staff; 80% of the case studies were contributed by southern/transitional country members of the SDCN.
Workshops	3	3 workshops held: Global Knowledge 1997 [35 participants] Global Knowledge 2000 [60 participants] SD Web Communications Initiative “Writeshop”, Vancouver, 2001. By invitation: 24 web managers from CSOs around the world brought together to prepare a training curriculum for CSO web communicators.
Cumulative Outcomes: Network members		<p>Members all commented on how much they valued the opportunity to share their communications practices (challenges, barriers and successes) with other organizations through major workshops at the Global Knowledge meetings in 1997 and 2000, and through the SD web communications writeshop in 2001. Every founding member has contributed to every workshop with the exception of SEI, which was unable to attend either GK 2000 or the 2001 writeshop. FFLA, EcoNews Africa, Acceso and Foundation for Media Alternatives participated in the writeshop. All founding members and Mekong Info have contributed one or more case studies to SD Webworks.</p> <p>This demonstrates an over 90% level of engagement and support from the membership for this work program (the sole exception was the Institute for Sustainable Development, Poland).</p> <p>A number of members have gone to other venues to promote this capacity building component of the SDCN: ENDA has been seeking funding for regional training workshops; SEI invited IISD and EC to contribute to the Hanover 2000 meeting; DA promoted the SDCN at TaskNet; REC is using lessons from the SDCN in its initiative on Environmental NGO Networking in SouthEastern Europe.</p> <p>This work program was most successful at positioning the SDCN within a crowded field of ICT trainers and information networks. Members focused on the effective use of the web medium (writing, editing, design, navigation, and management of the communications process integrated with other media – print, audio, etc.) rather than on technical and infrastructure issues. Members liken this to learning how to make a movie rather than learning how to turn on a camera.</p>

Stories: members	<p>DA: found “the opportunity to come together and document a manual for budding web managers” to be one of the most exciting outcomes of participating in the network.</p> <p>FARN: “the SDWCI writeshop was one of the most exciting experiences in my work with the SDCN. I felt it was a great opportunity to learn a lot from other participants while bringing a useful tool to the NGO community. It also resulted in significant personal growth, by allowing me to meet people from different parts of the world and share with them different experiences, knowledge and points of view.” FARN in particular noted that they believe they have contributed to the SDCN a better understanding of how the Internet is used in a developing country.</p>
Cumulative Outcomes: Stakeholder Group	<p>This work program has been a solid success for the SDCN, demonstrated by the growth of the SD Webworks, the level of participation of stakeholders in SD Webworks, and the inclusion of the SDCN knowledge on web communications and management practices in the new international portal site “ITrainOnline”, a collaboration of the major organizations involved in ICT capacity development for civil society: OneWorld, APC, Bellanet, IICD, Benton Foundation, TechSoup. DFID funding is currently being sought to support a major expansion of ITrainOnline, including the SDCN component.</p> <p>As an effort to increase the communication between various CSOs dealing with sustainable development, the SDCN began carrying out web reviews free of charge to selected organizations. In total, six members carried out the reviews of twenty organizations in thirteen different countries.</p> <p>Given the number of competing workshops during GK2000, we were extremely pleased to have a sellout crowd for the SDCN workshop. A contributing factor was that the workshop was largely focused on developing country experience with using the web medium for communications, rather than technical and infrastructure issues.</p> <p>As a result of the success of the SDCN with this work program, we were approached by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation and UNEP-DTIE to provide advice on their web communications practices. We also provided input to IDRC’s web development.</p>
Stories: stakeholders	
Unexpected	
Adjustments	As this is the area of greatest interest and energy for SDCN members, we will focus our Phase 3 plans here.

Planning sheet: Research and demonstration project on integrated communications

<i>For Work program 4</i>	Research and demonstration project on integrated communications		
Step 2: Who did we want to influence or change?	a) Members: IISD, ENDA, Development Alternatives b) Stakeholders: CSOs, IGOs seeking advice on integrated communications		
Step 3: How were we going to effect those changes?	Work plan Activities and Outputs Specific activities to meet objectives; metrics of deliverables	Outcomes : Network members Assessing change in behaviour, relationships, activities in network members	Outcomes: Stakeholder group Assessing change in behaviour, relationships, activities of parties targeted by network members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a framework for an integrated approach to communications • Demonstration project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a module illustrating an integrated approach to communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members reviewing, commenting on framework • Members developing more integrated approaches to communications (as demonstrated in use of multiple media for delivering products, use of multiple media for promoting products) • Members coming forward with new ideas for a seamless link between Internet communications and other forms of knowledge sharing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takeup of research in other reports • Consulting requests from stakeholders

Evaluation sheet: Research and demonstration project on integrated communications

Work program 4: Research and demonstration project on integrated communications		
Activities; Cumulative Outputs	Level of success	Indicators
Framework for an integrated approach to communications	2	A case study on integrating print and electronic publications policies and procedures was prepared for SD Webworks. This was expanded upon through a consulting contract with UNEP-DTIE, to create a broader framework that includes all forms of communication with target audiences. This framework evolved into a methodology for engagement, and was published as the working paper “Dating the Decision Makers: moving from communications to engagement strategies” (included as Chapter 3 in “Strategic Intentions”).
Demonstration project	2	The “Search for sustainable livelihoods module” on the SD Gateway illustrates the use of street theatre, story gathering, newsletter publication and Internet delivery as a suite of communications vehicles on livelihoods.
Cumulative Outcomes: Network members		<p>In the earliest days of Spinning the Web, ENDA and DA both expressed the need to develop a seamless link between information flowing onto and off of the Internet with other methods of communications with those who do not have access to the Internet. Both were intrigued with the potential of real audio/real video on the Internet. While we were able to capture messages through story telling, theatre and so forth for delivery via the web, we did not complete the “downlink”: moving information from the web into other formats. Instead, more attention was paid to how members might work in an integrated way with all the media tools available to them to provide knowledge to the local level and to influence decision makers.</p> <p>EcoNews Africa was invited into the SDCN, in part because they have had some experience with taking information off the Internet and redistributing it via their news services to African users. However, we were unable to make use of their expertise during Phase 2.</p> <p>Members have not come forward with new approaches to the “seamless link” concept. Instead, we are seeing a growth of interest in “telecentres” with ENDA’s CyberPop projects and DA’s Tarahaat, addressing the access problem more directly rather than creating intermediary mechanisms. We see similar trends in CEE and Latin America, with the general growth of Internet access in those regions.</p> <p>This work program has been particularly transformative for IISD, in coming to an understanding that relationships, not information, are at the centre of change. “The real problem isn’t that people don’t have access to information. The problem is that once they have information, they can’t influence anyone.” [Willard, Strategic Intentions, p36]. Engagement strategies require knowledge networks to go beyond being providers of information - to gradually engage key sustainable development decision makers in their work – slowly building more formal and enduring relationships with greater impact on policy and practice around the world [Willard].</p>

Stories: members	ENDA used the demonstration project as an opportunity to provide members of associations with training in journalism, including written, radio, theater and video reports. The workshop participants were closely involved at all steps of the process, and developed promotional tools for their group through the preparation of this module. Their print newsletter, "Jokkoo", was created as a forum for community actors collaborating with ENDA.
Cumulative Outcomes: Stakeholder Group	<p>Stakeholders have been more interested in our work on integrated communications and in the process of engagement, rather than in the need for a “seamless link” for information flows.</p> <p>The most significant outcome is that IIED’s RING has agreed to let IISD lead the work on “sharing lessons on the methods and capacities of SD research/ communication/ engagement that are most influential in achieving change”, as part of a major initiative on research partnerships being supported by UNDESA, with funding currently being secured from DFID, UN Foundation, CIDA and Rockefeller.</p>
Stories: stakeholders	
Unexpected	
Adjustments	<p>We will not pursue creating a “seamless link to move information off the Internet into other media. However, it may be useful, starting with EcoNews Africa, to research the efforts of other organizations attempting to move information on and off the Internet, and document their lessons learned.</p> <p>As we stated in the adjustments for work program 2, organizations need to come to a better understanding of integrated communications and engagement strategies, so they will begin to include communications lines in project budgets that will be more robust and will cover the web development costs. As part of the capacity development work for CSOs, we will develop training materials and case studies on planning, funding, and implementing integrated communications strategies.</p>

Planning sheet: The Network plan; Monitoring the network advantage

<p>Step 4: The Network plan; Monitoring the Network Advantage</p>	<p>In addition to specific work programs which involve individual members, the network plan focuses on those activities related to the network as a whole. This step should show how the network advantage is being realized: linking to stakeholders in policy processes and the implementation of SD (effecting change in policy and practice for sustainable development); joint value creation; capacity development across the network.</p>		
	<p>Work plan Activities and Outputs Specific activities to meet objectives; metrics of deliverables</p>	<p>Outcomes : Network members Assessing change in behaviour, relationships, activities in network members</p>	<p>Outcomes: Stakeholder group Assessing change in behaviour, relationships, activities of parties targeted by network members</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing, expanding the network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of network • Governance agreement • # members, diversity of regional and SD knowledge in the network • Research on managing knowledge networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # workshops held • Publication of research • # of books/papers distributed • Identifying processes where we might have some influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well structured, efficient and durable knowledge network with solid representation from developing regions • Member organizations see enough benefits from participating in the knowledge network that it becomes self-sustaining. • Members review, comment on knowledge networks research • Members apply the knowledge network model to other networks in which they are involved • Members suggest processes where SDCN might make a contribution • Members participate in those contributions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests to join the network • Participation in workshops • Request for further advice on knowledge networking • Application of research to their own networks • Invitations to contribute to relevant processes • Support for participation • Changes in policy positions and practices that can be attributed to the input from the SDCN

Evaluation sheet: The Network plan; Monitoring the network advantage

The Network plan		
Activities	Level of success	Indicators/Stories/Comments
Establishing, expanding the network	3	<p>The network has grown from 7 founding organizations in 1996 to 14 member organizations in 2001 (85% representation from southern/transitional countries), with a surrounding community of practice in the Sustainability Webring (181 organizations, 10% southern/transitional) and the SDWebworks (330 participants, 25% southern/transitional). Taking some overlap into account, we estimate a combined community of over 450 organizations and individuals, with over 20% representation from the south.</p> <p>The governance agreement, signed by members, provides the guiding vision, objectives, roles, and decision making mechanisms.</p> <p>The founding members have a very well established set of relationships. They believe they have contributed much to each other (through the joint module projects) and to the network as a whole. The affiliate members have been solid contributors to the web communications initiative. Two of four members brought in through the twinning process (EcoNews Africa and FFLA) have been good additions in terms of regional expansion, but in listening to FFLA, it was clear that we did not make enough opportunity for them to contribute to the network as a whole.</p>
Research on managing knowledge networks	3	<p>Throughout the life of the network, IISD has captured the lessons learned on managing knowledge networks. This has been an iterative process with both members and stakeholders, starting with the initial operating principles discussed with network members at the GK 2000 members meeting. Workshops were then held with IDRC, CIDA and World Bank staff. Working papers were prepared and circulated to managers of other knowledge networks at IISD and the World Bank.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REC has commented that the GK2000 meeting was a peak point for the SDCN, “where the topic of knowledge networking came to the most intensive discussion ... I really had the feeling that we were doing something innovative and we were at the forefront of progress.” • SEI believes that “getting to know more about how knowledge networks can work” is the mainstay of SDCN. “It has changed my approach to doing international projects”. • EC commented that participating in the SDCN helped to validate some of its approaches with the network of the National Councils for Sustainable Development. <p>In December 2001, IISD published the book “Strategic Intentions: managing knowledge networks for sustainable</p>

		development”, based on the lessons learned from the SDCN and other networks.
Identifying processes where the SDCN might have some influence	3	<p>In phase 1, several members provided input to and support for the Rio+5 consultations organized by the Earth Council in 1997.</p> <p>The importance of connecting to these kinds of international processes was raised by the Earth Council at the 1999 members meeting in Dakar, and it in many ways formed the basis of our understanding of the “network advantage”. The SDCN focused on Hanover 2000 and the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) as the two major events and processes where it believed it could have some influence on organizations promoting ICTs for sustainable development.</p>
Network Advantage Summary	Level of success	Indicators/Stories/Comments
Engagement of stakeholders in policy process and action	3	<p>The Earth Council, SEI and IISD found the Hanover experience to be very useful in terms of articulating the need for communications in moving the sustainable development agenda forward. However, there was no further outcome beyond the awareness raising for participants in the conference; and is on par with the variety of other presentations made by SDCN members over time on issues of ICTs, networks and development (EC- RIO+5 consultations, DA-Tasknet, IISD-Asian Energy Conference, the 2001 RING meeting, and so forth).</p> <p>Choosing GKP as an important process to connect with has had far better outcomes. GKP has led to increased levels of contact, interaction and trust built with key ICT stakeholders in NGO, IGO and donor communities. The building of relationships between APC, OneWorld, IICD, IISD/SDCN and Bellanet could only have happened through the forum provided by the GKP. This has led to the ITrainOnline initiative, which will combine the capacity building efforts of these organizations for far greater reach and impact.</p> <p>As stated in the vision section of this evaluation, IISD in particular saw the SDCN as an opportunity to contribute to the creation of a new model of international co-operation and development based on knowledge sharing. The knowledge networks research carried out by IISD, based on the experiences of the SDCN and other networks, has led to significant levels of engagement with other stakeholders. The following is a list of consultations on aspects of knowledge networking, partnerships and alliances requested by stakeholders as a result of IISD’s work in this area:</p> <p>UNDP – Energy program CIDA – Environet – CIDA’s internal thematic network on environment issues GDLN – IISD is working on structure and governance issues for the Global Development Learning Network GDN – Global Development Network IIED’s RING – IISD will be working on guidelines for communicating research as part of the RING’s research partnerships initiative</p>

		<p>Friends of the Earth Canada – on the potential of using this approach within the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement World Bank’s Global Programs CISE – Canadian Information System for the Environment UNDP with the WBCSD and the International Chamber of Commerce – IISD will be working with them on a review of multistakeholder partnerships for SD as a contribution to the WSSD.</p> <p>More work needs to be done to determine whether and how the knowledge network approach is benefiting policy development and implementation for sustainable development, how to evaluate network actions and how successful experiences can be replicated.</p> <p>Unexpected outcome</p> <p>As a result of IISD’s successful internship program, and in particular the placement of interns with SDCN members, IISD was approached by GKP to host a global consultation on the role of youth in building knowledge societies. From 2000-2001 IISD worked with the Global Knowledge Partnership to ensure that young people from around the world had opportunities to influence the debate on how to bridge the digital divide. The Global Knowledge Youth initiative provided input to both the Global Knowledge Action Plan and the G-8 Digital Opportunities Taskforce. A directory of digital divide initiatives by and/or for youth was incorporated into the GKP Portal.</p> <p>In September 2001, young people from TakingItGlobal, the Global Youth Action Network, and Nation1 took up the challenge of GK Youth to continue the youth-led dialogue, networking and advocacy on digital divide issues. This led to the launch of the Youth, ICTs and Digital Opportunities Network in February 2002. IISD will continue to interface between the SDCN and GKP, through its role chairing the GKP working group on youth.</p> <p>The relevant reports and recommendations are posted at www.iisd.org/networks/youth.asp.</p>
Joint Value Creation	2	<p>As discussed in Work Program 1.</p> <p>Members in general value the SD Gateway, are aware that in many cases the Gateway does direct users to members for further information, and has, through the Tomorrow magazine review, raised the profile of the SDCN. Many commented on how much they learned about joint value creation through the joint modules projects, and believe those modules represent good regional knowledge on important SD issues. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that members will seek the funding or in-kind support directly to continue creating SD knowledge products together, in contrast to the capacity development work where there is more enthusiasm for joint fundraising and development.</p>
Capacity Development	3	<p>As discussed in Work programs 2, 3.</p>

	<p>It is most likely that the extended community of practice will provide sufficient momentum to keep the SDCN viable through the ebb and flow of project funding. The high level of interest of members in capacity development will endorse the NCU's continued participation in ITrainOnline, which may provide financial resources to support further development of SDCN training materials.</p> <p>A new area of work is opening up, to provide capacity development for the operations and management of knowledge networks.</p>
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Efficiency of Network Operations (Doing things right)

Planning sheet: Network operations

Step 5: How were we going to work together?		
	Activity	Measures
	Network meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual face to face • Virtual (electronic /teleconferencing) 	# held # of member organizations represented; level of representation (the principal researcher or a delegate)
	Institutional support	# of member organizations which have signed the governance agreement # which have accepted and provide financial/in-kind support to an IISD intern
	Systems and procedures	Interaction with coordinator: timely, helpful Contract management on projects: on time, within budget Completion of reports (including intern reports)
	Financial resources	Diversification, leveraging of funding (attracting additional funds to network activities) Amount of direct financial contribution and in kind support from member institutions to network Member support for proposal development (providing input to proposals) # members that prepared project proposals and secured grants for network projects activities Information shared by members on network listserv about new funding prospects, requests for proposals
	Human resources	# of staff within each member organization involved with the SDCN # of staff within the Network Coordination Unit Women within member organizations have an increased capacity to utilize the Internet for research and communications

Evaluation sheet: Network operations

Efficiency of Network Operations		
Cumulative activities	Level of success	Comments
Meetings	3	5 face to face meetings were held; 1 virtual conference was held; plus the appreciative inquiry process was held virtually. All founding members participated either in person or via internet video conference, with the exception of the last Global Knowledge meeting, when SEI was unable to attend, due to prior commitments.
Institutional support	2	The heads of the member organizations have all signed the governance agreement. All founding members, FFLA and Acceso have taken interns, and provided financial support to those interns directly. Members have made good use of the network posters printed by the NCU to raise the profile of the SDCN within their own organizations.
Systems and procedures	2	A closed extranet was established to support communications between the NCU and members. Members in phase 1 greatly appreciated the role of Scott Anderson at the NCU in maintaining regular interaction via email among the members. Terri Willard, as Network Coordinator, did an excellent job with work program planning, contracting, reporting, and championing the web communications capacity development work and youth components. While all projects were completed within budget, timeliness has always been a challenge within the SDCN. In part it reflects the difficulties of doing joint projects with multiple partners; but it also reveals that institutional support was not always as strong as might have appeared, in that institutional work for all members always took priority over SDCN work, even when the SDCN was providing funds for projects. Only the Institute for Sustainable Development, Poland, did not meet its obligations and consequently the final payment to ISD was withheld.
Financial resources	2	Core funding for the network from IDRC and CIDA leveraged additional funding from the World Bank (via GDN and GKP initiatives) and from the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy (for interns). SEI and the Earth Council did not receive funding for their participation in the network, apart from travel costs to attend meetings, and a little support to SEI to provide input to one of the joint modules. The Earth Council noted in particular that the SDCN ideas (objectives and work programs) were too ambitious for the funding available. Members did review and comment on SDCN funding proposals prepared by IISD, but with one or two exceptions, members did not raise additional funds themselves to support network projects. Members did not share information about funding prospects.
Human resources	2	50% of the founding members have two or more staff directly involved with the SDCN: one at the decision making level (a VP or Director) and one at the technical or implementation level. From 1997-2001, all founding members received interns at

	<p>least twice, and most took an intern every year. In phase 1, the NCU had 3 full time staff (supported by IDRC and IISD); in phase 2, the NCU was managed solely by the Network Coordinator with help from an intern.</p> <p>Staff turnover within the member organizations had significant impact on the network, leading to spurts and stalls on the various work programs over time. REC's representative changed twice; DA and EC's technical people changed once; PDA's representative disengaged due to illness; ENDA's second person was moved to other projects; the EC senior representative has now left the EC; SEI has been constrained in its participation due to a rigorous project accounting system which reduces "pro bono" activities like network participation. MekongInfo's interest dropped off when the point person moved to another organization.</p> <p>We are unable to comment on the gender outcome of network operations, other than to say that as of December 2001, 2/3 of all members have one or more women representatives to the SDCN. In addition to that, ENDA runs a gender in ICT program, and women from member organizations (SEI, Foundation for Media Alternatives) have participated in individual project work. We do not see this as a direct outcome of SDCN activity, but rather a reflection that web communications has evolved from the technical domain and is drawing on the traditional strengths of women – "teamwork, service orientation and communications skills" [Strategic Intentions, p76.].</p>
Operational Results	<p>Apart from the issue of timeliness of deliverables and the lack of member participation in fundraising efforts, the SDCN has operated efficiently, with excellent accountability both to members via the members' extranet and to funders via financial and substantive reporting. The role of the network co-coordinator has been key to the efficient operations, but equally important has been the role (present in phase 1 but absent in phase 2) of the network "busybody" – the person who keeps the conversations going around the network. A future HR model for the network might reduce the % of time required for a network coordinator (who would then be free to work on some of the substantive research areas) and increase the intern position from 6 months to a full year.</p> <p>On the issue of institutional priorities versus network priorities: this is an issue that all networks are struggling with. Earth Council noted that in all such collaborative arrangements, trying to align the agenda of the network with the agenda of each member organization is very difficult. Organizations talk about collaboration, but priorities are always set differently.</p>
Unexpected	<p>On the financial side, recent "mega fund" projects are impacting the SDCN's ability to raise funds for its smaller network projects. In particular, the UNDP's thematic trust fund for ICTs and the Development Gateway Foundation are attracting grants from bilateral assistance agencies and foundations, making it more difficult for networks like the SDCN to secure resources. It does not appear likely that the SDCN will be able to tap into the UNDP or the Development Gateway Foundation for some time to come, given that both organizations appear to be focused entirely at the country level, rather than at the regional or international networking level.</p>
Adjustments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IISD will continue to provide a role for the SDCN Coordinator, through various designated grants related to SDCN activities, and consulting contracts to other organizations. In addition, some thought will be given to a year long internship to provide communications support among the members, and to maintain some of the knowledge products on the SD Gateway. 2. A new model for the SDCN is proposed in the conclusions section, which will address operational sustainability together with substantive work programs in the next phase of the SDCN. 3. Additional work must be done to examine the tension between institutional and network priorities, as this seems to be a significant and unresolved issue to many organizations seeking to collaborate with others.

Conclusions

The SDCN has been established and operational since its initiation as Spinning the Web in 1996. Representation in the network is global, with 14 member organizations located in South and Central America, South and Southeast Asia, Africa, Central and Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and North America (85% representation from developing/transitional countries), and an extended community of over four hundred and fifty organizations and individuals throughout the world, participating through the SD Webworks and the Sustainability Web Ring (over 20% representation from developing/transitional countries).

In its earliest days, the SDCN was initiated with a strong technical component to improve access to and aggregate the SD information from the member organizations. This led to the development of the SD Gateway and related SD knowledge products. The SDCN has now branded itself as a network focused on strengthening electronic communications and collaboration practices within organizations, in order to move the SD agenda forward. Particular emphasis has been on building the communications capacity of developing country organizations in order to get their SD knowledge more widely shared. While valued by members, the SD Gateway has become a secondary function of the SDCN, serving largely to profile selected developing country organization knowledge bases once they are available.

The SD Gateway and its related products (including the Sustainability Web Ring) are, however, widely used by a variety of audiences around the world, and do serve to direct users to further information from network members in developing/transition countries. The SD Gateway clearly has a niche and user demand, with demonstrable benefits to developing/transitional country organizations. More work needs to be done to consolidate that niche, in light of the emergence of the Development Gateway and the growing sophistication of ELDIS (University of Sussex).

In participating in the Appreciative Inquiry portion of the evaluation, members found their highest energy points when they shared their communications practices (challenges, barriers and successes) with each other at the network meetings, and when they were able to inform other organizations through major workshops at the Global Knowledge meetings in 1997 and 2000, and through the SD web communications writeshop in 2001. The production of joint modules on SD issues was important as much for the “learning by doing” experience with virtual collaboration as it was for the actual knowledge products created. Internally, members used SDCN to build communications capacity within their respective organizations and to validate their approaches to technology and electronic publishing. Externally, members used SDCN to promote their lessons learned to other SD communications practitioners in developing/transitional countries. The reputation built through the SD Webworks has led to the inclusion of the SD Webworks knowledge base in the ITrainOnline collaboration of OneWorld, APC, Bellanet, and IICD. The SDCN has clearly found its niche in the capacity development activities.

We do not believe, however, that future capacity development in SD communications should be carried out by providing funds directly to selected organizations for increasing the content

on their respective websites. As we stated under work program 2, every organization, whether in developed, developing or transitional countries, will always need financial resources to support web publishing. We recommend that it is now more appropriate to put resources into training, knowledge sharing and peer mentoring for effective use of the medium, for good web planning and management practices, and for virtual collaboration. As organizations come to a better understanding of integrated communications and engagement strategies, they will begin to include communications lines in project budgets that will be more robust and will cover the web development costs. Benefits to developing/transitional organizations will go beyond increased visibility of their knowledge (through the SD Gateway) to improved interaction with decision makers and greater take-up of knowledge from the south.

At the level of the specific objectives and related work programs, the SDCN was successful in producing all deliverables, and meeting the basic objectives of the network: joint communication of SD knowledge, building communications capacity for members and others, experimentation with integrated communications approaches. The majority of outcomes met or exceeded expectations, in terms of strengthening communications capacity in members, raising awareness among stakeholder groups and engaging stakeholders in the work programs. Only a few outcomes were marginal at best. These related primarily to institutional support and integration issues: the reliance of most members on the NCU to promote research and other activities of members through the SD Gateway and SDCN Announces rather than taking responsibility for these tasks directly; institutional priorities taking precedence over network activities leading to delays on projects, and the lack of active participation in proposal development and fundraising for network activities from most network members.

IISD monitored the SDCN, together with other networks hosted by IISD and others, in order to create a number of principles and protocols for network operations, and to determine what advantage there is in institutional collaboration and partnerships. IISD was able to elicit from the SDCN experience and its other research the “network advantage”: the ability to bridge the research/action gap through effective linking to policy processes; joint value creation; and capacity development for research and communications. IISD’s work on knowledge networks has served to engage significant interest from stakeholders involved in SD research (IIED/Regional and International Networking Group, Global Development Network), development learning (World Bank/Global Development Learning Network), and multistakeholder partnerships (UNDP with WBCSD and the International Chamber of Commerce). Aspects of IISD’s model are being taken up and tested by others. More work needs to be done to determine whether and how the knowledge network approach is benefiting policy development and implementation for sustainable development, how to evaluate network actions and how successful experiences can be replicated. An unexpected outcome was the success in engaging youth around the world in the debate on building knowledge societies and bridging the digital divide.

Recommendations

1. Consolidation of the SDCN into an open community of practice

Vision, structure

The vision of the SDCN remains valid: the acceleration of the implementation of sustainable development through broader, integrated information and communications about what we know. However, the objectives should be narrowed and the organizational model should be revised.

The formal knowledge network model is no longer suited to achieve the vision of the SDCN. That model serves best when the focus of the network is on joint research projects between member organizations. Instead, the SDCN has been most effective and had most energy when it has worked to strengthen communications managers to become more effective within their organizations. A community of practice model is more in line with this work.

The SDCN should revise its structure and governance as follows:

- Membership should be individual rather than institutional. It should be open to all communications practitioners who wish to share knowledge about communicating more effectively for sustainable development. The target membership group should be practitioners in civil society organizations in developing/transitional countries.
- A steering committee should guide the network, composed of representatives from the active members of Phases 1 and 2 of the SDCN (REC, DA, ENDA, FARN, EC, SEI, IISD, FFLA, EcoNews Africa, Acceso, Foundation for Media Alternatives). The role of the steering committee should be:
 - To maintain the continuity of the vision of the SDCN,
 - Advise on and evaluate tools and services for the network,
 - Promote the network to ensure strong participation from the south.
- The Network Coordination Unit at IISD should continue to provide the secretariat functions for the network. The relationships and communications vehicles are sufficiently well established that the NCU should be able to function with a half time coordinator and a full time intern.
- Financial resources to support the NCU and the Steering Committee should come from the designated grants secured for the work programs developed to meet network objectives. Special effort should be made to source funds for the internship position, to recruit young communications professionals from developing/transition countries to work in the NCU every year.
- The SDCN should focus its work to meet two objectives:

- Strengthen the capacity within civil society organizations in developing/transitional countries to communicate SD knowledge more effectively.
- Maintain the SD Gateway as the vehicle to integrate and promote the SD knowledge of the world's leading organizations.

The most significant outcome of the first objective will be the increase of in-depth, well presented knowledge products from key developing/transitional country organizations in the SD Gateway.

Objective 1. Capacity development for SD communications

Recommended areas of work

- Membership engagement
 - Profiles of areas of expertise
 - Staff exchanges and internships
 - General discussion forum combined with highly focused e-consultations on specific communications challenges
 - Marketing and promotion of the network
- Peer mentoring
 - Frameworks for reviewing communications products
 - Members can then use frameworks to review their own and each others' work in a systematic, constructive process
- Distributed learning
 - SD Webworks: curriculum for web management, including articles, case studies, other resources
 - SD Publishing: curriculum for management of editing, printing practices, including articles, case studies, other resources. Special attention to be paid to training in cross cutting issues such as gender, so that communications managers ensure that such issues are consistently addressed in the products of their organizations.
 - SD Communications Strategies: techniques from advocacy campaigns, social marketing, fund raising, multistakeholder processes; techniques for integrated approaches, including moving information up to and down from the web; integrated planning and budgeting to move web development costs into more robust communications lines in substantive research projects.

Recommended alliances

In general	Global Knowledge Partnership [ongoing]
SD Webworks	ITrainOnline [alliance in place]
SD Publishing	Simon Fraser Centre for Publishing [initial discussions held]
SD Communications Strategies	Johns Hopkins Communications Initiative [no approach made as yet] Tools of Change [currently developing some frameworks through another project]

Objective 2. SD Gateway and related SD knowledge products

Niche clarification

SD Gateway	The SD Gateway will be highly selective directory of information resources from the leading SD research institutions, with particular emphasis on institutions in developing/transitional countries. The SD Gateway will raise awareness of knowledge in the south, will enable comparisons between northern/southern knowledge bases, and will direct users quickly and efficiently to the information they need for research and decision making.
Google	Google is the premier search engine on the web. We believe that the majority of users start with Google rather than a specialized portal site. However, smaller southern websites have difficulty getting into the higher rankings in Google, due to the Google catch 22: if other organizations don't know you exist, they won't link to you; if they don't link to you, you won't get a high ranking in Google; without a high ranking in Google they won't know you exist. By continuing to build the market for the SD Gateway, and maintaining its rank in Google's top 20 websites for sustainable development, and its reputation as the best portal site, we can then drive users more directly to the best information from key organizations in the south.
Development Gateway	The most recent emphasis of the Development Gateway is on the building of country level gateways rather than thematic gateways. There is no thematic gateway as yet on sustainable development. The current thematic gateways are compiled by individuals rather than through a network of expert organizations.
Eldis	Both Eldis and the Development Gateway emphasize development information rather than the more holistic "sustainable development" content. While the SD Gateway will serve to bring forward southern knowledge, it will also emphasize the best knowledge bases in the north on SD issues– providing comparative approaches and concentrating on the best information needed for decision making.
OneWorld	OneWorld's approach is more social justice oriented, with a strong media approach, profiling stories rather than providing the quick navigation to in-depth research that the SD Gateway provides.

Recommended areas of work

- SDCN Steering committee to revise criteria for inclusion of content in the SD Gateway; expand the content base to between 50 and 100 key organizations
- Increase the number of directories on the site to include, inter alia, directories of organizations, biographies of SD leaders, online library databases
- Strengthen the functionality of the Gateway with the purchase of a more robust search engine that will permit the full indexing of key organizations' websites (to complement the more focused and selective SD Topics links directory)
- Create an interface that will permit searching of the major library databases and implement a document delivery system
- Market and promote the SD Gateway through alliances with other portal sites, and promotion at major SD events.

Recommended alliances

In general	Approach the Development Gateway to use the SD Gateway as the SD thematic gateway Approach Eldis to profile the SD Gateway as a highly selective directory of the best of SD knowledge Continue discussions with IIED/RING to act as the communications vehicle for RING member research.
Expansion of directories	Currently negotiating support for this component through a variety of WSSD funding sources
Technical components (search engine; library database interfaces)	Given the downturn in the IT sector, it is unlikely that we will be able at this time to find an IT champion for this component. We will approach the IT private foundations for support.

2. Separate IISD's research interests on formal knowledge networks from the SDCN.

Purpose

In listening to our stakeholders, it is clear that there is enormous interest and need for learning how to bridge the gap between research and action for sustainable development. However, as the Earth Council noted in the Appreciative Inquiry process, the SDCN attempted to undertake more projects than it had sufficient resources for. And while more effective communications is an important component in bridging that gap, other tools are also needed. Different types of relationship structures; improved management of partnerships and alliances; better monitoring and evaluation to determine what really works – these are also important, and go beyond the SDCN focus on strengthening communications practices.

We therefore recommend that the work on knowledge networks, which was conducted by IISD in part under the auspices of the SDCN, be continued by IISD as an independent activity. IISD should focus its activities to meet the following objective:

- Develop, document and promote the collaborative structures, tools and strategies needed to bridge the research-action gap in sustainable development

Objective: Bridging the research – action gap

Recommended areas of work

- Develop a two year research program to explore the following questions
 - how to strengthen the engagement strategies of networks and alliances in order to move their advice and solutions into practice;

- how to strengthen the management and governance of networks and alliances, with particular attention to financial and human resource sustainability;
- how to address the tensions between institutional priorities and network agendas;
- how to learn from private sector experience with strategic alliances. Will the civil society community working in sustainable development be transformed through similar approaches to collaboration? Will the use of network and alliance models streamline internal business processes in organizations, leading to more rapid and effective interventions in policy and practice?; and
- how to measure and evaluate the work of networks, to determine whether the network advantage is being achieved.

We need to effect at least one significant behaviour change with our research: that network members and managers will begin to monitor their work more regularly, to see whether their collaboration is in fact leading to better-informed research results, new knowledge and real influence.

- Build a community of practice around the issue of knowledge networks, multistakeholder partnerships, global public policy networks, and strategic alliances as critical organizational models for moving the SD agenda forward.
- Continue to include and draw upon the strengths of young professionals in the knowledge networks in which IISD is a member.
- Develop and implement a communications strategy to promote the research program and community of practice.

Recommended alliances

Research program	IIED/RING and the Research Institutes initiative with UNDESA
Community of practice	UNDP with WBCSD/ICC
Youth	GKP; TakingITGlobal

I. Prototype Planning and Evaluation Framework Appendices

Note: an earlier version of these frameworks appears in the Working Paper, “Measuring while you manage.”

A. Detailed Planning Framework

A. Doing the right thing: Network Effectiveness	
Steps	Explanation
Step 1: What are we going to do?	<p>Members refine goals and objectives as described in funding agreements. The purpose of the discussion is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek clarity and endorsement of the overarching goal of the network • Refine specific objectives: these could be amended, enhanced or prioritized so long as they remain consistent with the goal. • Seek from members what they can contribute to, and hope to gain from, participating in the network as a whole. • Seek from members a preliminary view of what success would look like for the network. <p>Several major projects or programs of work for the network will be identified through this discussion.</p>
For Work Program1 (2,3)	<i>Steps 2 and 3 may need to be repeated for each of the major areas of works, if there are significant differences in stakeholders, activities, and outcome for each work program.</i>
Step 2: Who are we going to influence or change?	<p>In a network, there are two groups that will be changed or influenced by their interaction with the network and its work program(s):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the network members themselves 2. the stakeholders <p>a) The network members themselves. Network members should be chosen based on their strengths as maevens, connectors, and/or salespeople². They each have some measure of influence in the world. However, participation in the network can serve to strengthen the effectiveness of each member, including the dominant/lead partner. The resulting changes in their behaviours, relationships and activities can fall into three categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Changes in individual member activities as an outcome of network participation ○ Progressive levels of interaction among network members ○ Progressive levels of effort to engage the stakeholders each member wishes to influence

²We have adopted these characteristics from M. Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How little things can make a big difference* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2000). Maevens are the research experts; connectors are those with connections to decision makers; salespeople are those with the ability to craft and communicate messages. Selection of members with reference to these characteristics is discussed in our working paper “Form follows function: management and governance of knowledge networks”.

	<p>b) The stakeholders: those individuals and groups outside of the network that the network wants to influence: those who should have a vested interest in the work of the network, with the ability to act or to influence others to act. Specificity is needed in this discussion – broad categories of stakeholders (government, media, and academia) will not be helpful, as it will be difficult to articulate desired outcomes as behaviour changes for broad categories. This list of stakeholders may vary for each member and for each project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government ministers – which ones? Name positions [eg, the trade minister for Chile] • Mid-level bureaucrats – which ones? Name positions [eg, the climate change negotiator for Senegal] • Private sector: CEOs or environmental managers? Multinationals or small and medium sized enterprises? • Journalists – for which papers or networks? Mainstream or alternative? • Top researchers—at which institutions? <p>Changes in behaviours, relationships, and activities of stakeholders can be determined by progressive levels of their awareness of and interaction with individual network members, and with the network as a whole.</p>		
<p>Step 3: How are we going to effect those changes through this program of work?</p>	<p>This is the substantive discussion of the work plan for the specific program of work</p>		
<p>Work plan and outputs: Specific activities to meet objectives; metrics of deliverables on work plan</p>	<p>Outcomes : Network members Assessing change in behaviour, relationships, activities in network members</p>	<p>Outcomes: Stakeholder group Assessing change in behaviour, relationships, activities</p>	
<p><i>Types of activities; sample outputs, indicators</i></p>	<p><i>Types of outcomes; sample indicators</i></p>	<p><i>Types of outcomes; sample indicators</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual members undertaking new research / communications projects done under the auspices of the network, measured by # specific research outputs • two or more members undertaking new projects or services jointly, measured by # products, services • holding electronic consultations on research findings, measured by # public electronic conferences held; # of participants in e-conference • presentations at peer-oriented conferences (professional, academic associations), measured by # presentations given • Face to face workshops with stakeholder group, measured by # workshops held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members strengthening each other’s work, indicated by circulating research papers to each other for comment, peer review. • Members creating new knowledge together, indicated by co-authoring papers. • Members improving their linkage to policy process, indicated by hosting of workshops with stakeholders invited; securing face to face meetings with key decision makers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders interacting directly with network members, as indicated by # participating actively in electronic conferences, # attending workshops; level of representation at workshops. • Stakeholders approaching network members for more advice or research, indicated by #accepting face to face meetings; # decision makers contracting network members for further work. • Stakeholders changing activities based on network actions/outputs, as indicated by replicating workshops on their own; by preparing position papers drawing from network research. 	
<p>REPEAT FOR ADDITIONAL PROJECTS BEFORE GOING TO STEP 4</p>			

<p>Step 4: The Network Plan</p>	<p>Once the specific projects and research interests have been addressed, members can revisit the general objectives, and begin to consider how to capture the cumulative effect of the individual projects and whether there are activities that all members can contribute to, which help to consolidate the network as more than an umbrella for individual projects. This step should refocus members on how to realize the network advantage: joint value creation, linking to stakeholders in the policy process; capacity development across the network.</p>		
<p>Process:</p>			
	<p>Work plan and outputs: Specific activities to meet objectives; metrics of deliverables on work plan</p>	<p>Outcomes : Network members Assessing change in behaviour, relationships, activities in network members</p>	<p>Outcomes: Stakeholder group Assessing change in behaviour, relationships, activities</p>
	<p><i>Types of activities; sample outputs, indicators</i></p>	<p><i>Types of outcomes; sample indicators</i></p>	<p><i>Types of outcomes; sample indicators</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a network website and public listserv to share information about network activities, measured by website traffic, # subscribers to listserv • Identification of major events related to the interests of the network; plans for displays, side events, presentations, etc. • Monitoring the activities of the network for their cumulative “network advantage”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members sharing information with each other across the network, indicated by linking materials to website, posting notices to listserv. • Members working together on articles related to network objectives, for publication in main stream media outlets. • Members actively participating in major events they otherwise would not have had access to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders demonstrating increased levels of interest in network activities/outputs, indicated by # users <u>from stakeholder group</u> downloading content from website, joining network listserv for further information. • Stakeholders approaching network members for more advice or research, indicated by #requests for materials, # decision makers contracting network members for further work.

Doing things right: Efficiency of Network operations		
Step 5: How are we going to work together?	Process: Network coordinator reviews with members the internal operations of the network. This is usually the last item on a network meeting's agenda, and deals largely with logistics and finances. The Network coordinator should encourage members to provide some indicators of efficient operations.	
	Types of activity	Sample Indicators
	Network meetings	# held, participation by members
	Institutional support	# institutions which sign governance agreement # presentations which network members make to their institutions # references to the network in individual member corporate communications
	Systems and procedures	Interaction with coordinator: timely, helpful Completion of quarterly progress journals Contract management on projects: on time, within budget
	Financial resources	Attracting additional funds to network activities Renewal of grants Amount of direct financial contribution and in kind support from member institutions to network activities
	Human resources	# of staff within member organizations assigned to network activities

B. Monitoring Framework: Progress Journals

Quarterly Progress Journal for each Network Member

Activities tracked should be consistent with the planning framework; and should only be no more than 10 or 12. The Journal should be completed quarterly by the member and shared with the Network Coordinator. A separate journal should be kept for each major work program. This is simply a record of what happened during that quarter, the interesting stories about what is being done, but not an assessment of the work. At the evaluation stage, outcomes for the member and the stakeholders will be derived from the record of progress that has been made by that member, and the member's interaction with representatives of the stakeholder group.

For individual work program	Network member progress notes	Stakeholder interaction
Specific activities from work plan	What they have done during the quarter	Who they have interacted with during the quarter
1. Eg, publish research paper on web communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eg, circulated draft paper to network members for peer review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eg, Circulated draft research paper to experts outside of the network
2. Eg, hold training workshop on web communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eg, secured additional funding 	

The Network Plan	Network Coordinator Progress Notes	Stakeholder interaction
Specific activities for network as a whole Combined activities that demonstrate the network advantage		
1. Network website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eg, established network website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eg, Announcements of network website sent to key organizations
2. Participation in policy process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eg, created calendar of key processes where network should be represented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approaching contacts to attend key processes

Network Operations	Network Coordinator Progress Notes
1. Network meeting	Eg, held network meeting, x number of members attended
2. Institutional support	Eg, interns placed with network members
3. Financial resources	Eg, nothing this quarter

C. Evaluation Framework

We propose two points at which Network activities are evaluated.

1. An annual evaluation is needed in order to make adjustments to objectives, work plans and expected outputs and outcomes.
2. An end of grant evaluation is usually required by the funder.

Level of success: 1-did not meet expectations; 2-met expectations; 3-exceeded expectations

Network effectiveness:		
Overall network goals and objectives: what did we think success might look like for the network during this period and did we achieve that? General observations		
For Work Program 1 (2,3)		
Activities	Level of success	Outputs
Eg, Training Workshops	3	Eg, 2 workshops held; 50 participants; a report on workshops published
Outcomes: Members	Eg, Members undertook the project jointly and added significant value to each others' work, without which the workshops would not have been as influential.	
Stories: Members		
Outcomes: Stakeholders	Eg, Increased demand from stakeholders for training	
Stories: Stakeholders		
Unexpected Adjustments		

Network work plan		
Specific Activities	Level of success	Outputs
1. Network website	2	Website established
Monitoring the Network Advantage:		
	Note: this section is where the Network Coordinator consolidates the findings from the individual projects into an assessment of whether the network is fulfilling its potential	
Engagement of stakeholders in policy processes and action	Eg, not yet realized	
Joint value creation:	Eg, This is working extremely well at the individual project level, as demonstrated by the success of the training workshops. Across the network as a whole, however, joint value aggregation and creation is not as evident.	
Capacity development across Network	Eg, More work needs to be done on strengthening individual member communications capacity, to improve their effectiveness within their regions (this includes northern members).	
Unexpected		
Adjustments		

Network operations (efficiency)	Level of success	Comments
Meetings	3	Eg, all members attended the network meeting
Institutional support	2	Eg, 11 members signed the governance agreement; 8 members hosted interns
Financial resources	3	Eg, Seed funding for the network from foundation levered additional funding from bilateral development assistance agencies
Unexpected	Eg, staff turnover in 3 members	
Adjustments	Eg, create network manual for new representatives from members	

II. Network Documents Appendices

1. IDRC Phase 1 Proposal

2. IDRC Phase 2 Proposal

3. CIDA Phase 2 Proposal

4. Member vision statements, Phase 1

5. Logical Framework Analysis, Phase 2

Note: The original LFA was prepared to accompany a multi-million dollar, 3 year proposal to CIDA. A two-year, \$300,000 grant was awarded; consequently not all of the goals, outcomes and outputs in the LFA were retained in the revised proposal. Those that were have been highlighted.

6. SDCN Governance Agreement

7. IDRC Phase 1 Final Report

8. Tomorrow Magazine review of the SD Gateway

III. Working Paper Appendices

1. Tools for assessing Web site use

2. Measuring while you manage