

 **KNOWLEDGE FOR ACTION: JOINING HANDS
FOR RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE**



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As a knowledge-led organization, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) aims to leverage the collective intelligence, the development experiences and learnings, of its members and partners, as well as the larger DRI ecosystem, for generation and diffusion of knowledge towards actionable solutions for resilient infrastructure. As part of its series of DRI Dialogues, CDRI convened an online dialogue on **'Knowledge for Action: Joining Hands for Resilient Infrastructure'** to deliberate on the role of knowledge and learning in influencing policy and practice within the resilient infrastructure space.

Knowledge management experts and practitioners from leading international development organizations weighed in on knowledge as currency for their organizations and harnessing the power of knowledge and learning for transformative change.


DRI Dialogue

-  The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) is a global multi-stakeholder platform led and managed by national governments, UN agencies, multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector and knowledge institutions that aims to promote disaster resilient infrastructure (DRI).
-  The CDRI-DRI Dialogues facilitate the engagement of thought leaders and practitioners across civil society, academia, government, and private sector on challenges and solutions for promoting resilience of existing and new infrastructure.

Key Discussion Points

-  Rise of the Knowledge Economy – Value creation through knowledge
-  From Knowledge to Action - Pathways to influencing policy and practice for resilience of

infrastructure through knowledge and learning approaches

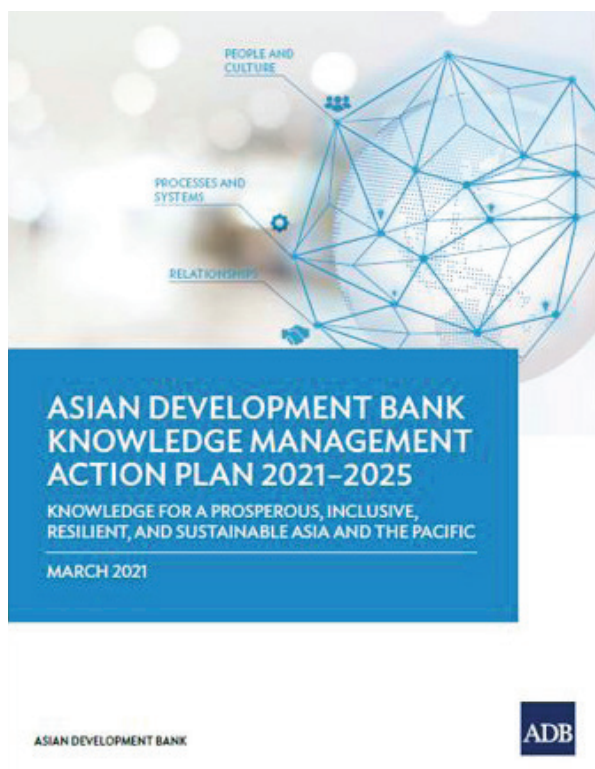
-  'Together, we go far' - Role of knowledge networks and communities in accelerating the search for actionable solutions in resilient infrastructure

Context

The 21st century is the age of the knowledge economy, where knowledge serves as currency and a strategic asset for most organizations and businesses. The key challenge for organizations working towards promoting DRI is curating, managing and applying knowledge for the specific aim of making infrastructure resilient to disasters and climate risks. Adaptation of traditional knowledge practices to modern scenarios of disaster risk management, measuring the impact and development effectiveness of knowledge management strategies and tools, mainstreaming knowledge management within organizational processes are some of the other considerations for organizations seeking to hone their knowledge strategies.

Key takeaways from the ADB experience

- People, ideas and solutions are key to an effective knowledge management strategy. There needs to be a shift from counting knowledge products to providing knowledge solutions and measuring these for impact.
- Organizations that have mature and evolved knowledge management strategies nurture their teams and partners as knowledge workers, working towards connecting people and fostering collaboration.
- Building a business case for knowledge management requires linking knowledge management outcomes with organizational outcomes, such as promoting



disaster resilient infrastructure. Knowledge as a strategic asset needs to be benchmarked and its progress measured as a part of the overall operational quality of an organization.

- There is a need for distributed knowledge management in terms of shared responsibility, creating a tribe of knowledge experts to manage, curate and share knowledge within an organization and within its ecosystem.
- Intra-organizational knowledge sharing through different knowledge solutions should be incentivized, not in terms of monetary gains, rather for professional satisfaction and recognition. Storytelling can be used as a vehicle to enhance knowledge sharing within and beyond an organization.

Key takeaways from the USAID experience

- For better development results and organizational effectiveness, it is important to ground programmes in evidence, which requires a systematic intentional and resourced approach to knowledge and dedicating necessary resources to it.
- It is vital to have the organizational development hypothesis grounded by assumptions of change such as disasters etc. The knowledge and learning framework should be anchored in checking the assumptions, learning from what is seen on the ground, monitoring results and adapting accordingly.
- It is vital to collaborate with the right partners at the right time to promote synergy, asking the relevant questions and finding answers relevant to decision-making, and using the information that is gathered through collaboration and learning activities to make better decisions and make course corrections as necessary.



- Knowledge management does not have to be an all-or-nothing approach. It requires a sustained and iterative approach, identifying gaps and addressing these as required.
- Knowledge management efforts need to be underpinned by systems and intentionality and resources. A robust knowledge management strategy requires an enabling environment in terms of an organizational culture where knowledge and learning are the norm, developing processes to store and share knowledge and allocating requisite resources.
- Bridging the knowledge gaps within and between organizations in the DRI space can create a revolutionary DRI.
- A specific objective for the DRI community to aim towards would be to use collective intelligence and data to demonstrate that resilient infrastructure financially outperforms conventional infrastructure. There is a need to mobilize collective knowledge to make a case for investors that resilient infrastructure makes financial sense, which will create not just business but also impact value from knowledge work.

Key takeaways from the Global Infrastructure Basel (GIB) experience

- There is a need to think beyond creating business value for knowledge management to creating collaborative impact value in the entire infrastructure sector. Knowledge to action requires capacity, regulations and incentives.
- There are clear knowledge gaps in the resilient infrastructure space in terms of:
 - » Best practices for improving resilience
 - » Data on forward-looking shocks and stresses, particularly related to climate change
 - » Knowledge of how to move finance to resilient infrastructure
- GIB has been addressing the knowledge gaps within the resilient infrastructure space in terms of: developing a repository of best practice knowledge to design, operate and maintain sustainable and resilient infrastructure, sourced from a network of organizations and used to assess projects and train people (SuRe standards); sourcing and evaluating infrastructure assets through publicly available documentation, bringing multiple sources of information (Sustainable Infrastructure Intelligence Tool); providing professional training in sustainability and resilience for infrastructure through a massive open online course based in the SuRe Standard; and partnering with organizations to bring together knowledge across the European Union, collect case studies and lessons learnt and to create a launchramp to originate projects for flood reduction using nature-based infrastructure (Nature for Catchments Launchramp).

The Coalition perspective

- Disaster resilience of infrastructure is classified as a 'wicked' problem which requires multidimensional, multidisciplinary, and systemic focus. There is a need for an iterative cycle of knowledge dissemination, bringing knowledge into practice, learning from practice and feeding back into the knowledge creation process. Knowledge management can be a catalyst for driving the process of change in the space of DRI.
- The Coalition's knowledge strategy is two-fold: retaining a futuristic vision at all times, in terms of staying ahead of the curve with regard to the ever-changing context; and focusing on being solution-centred so as to avoid duplication with other actors as well as to avoid common mistakes.
- Governance for DRI hinges on effective knowledge flows, and the development and sharing of updated standards and codes and performance benchmarks. The global nature of disaster resilience of infrastructure has uncovered interdependencies between countries, between states and sub national entities. There is, thus, a clear need for establishing a neutral knowledge platform for decision-makers, planners and implementers to identify common challenges and share, learn and adapt good practices for resilient infrastructure.
- Globally, communities of practice are driving the knowledge management discourse where relevant and contextual knowledge is made accessible to people who need it.
- The Coalition's knowledge management offerings include the DRI Dialogues, a powerful conversational space which brings together experiences and learnings in an impactful and an action-oriented perspective within the DRI domain; and DRI Connect, a neutral engagement, learning and collaboration platform for diverse stakeholders to discuss and converge on common pathways towards resilient infrastructure. The platform will also serve as a hotbed for peer learning journeys and communities of practice in the space.

SuRe® - The standard for Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure

Sustainable Infrastructure Intelligence Tool

SuRe® Professional Training & Qualifications

Nature for Catchments Launchramp

Recommendations

- Rather than expending effort in tracing and demonstrating on-ground impact of knowledge management, organizations should move from the point of acknowledging that knowledge is an asset and use tools like communities of practice, storytelling and encouraging anecdotal evidence and sharing among practitioners. The focus should be on how many sticky problems/issues have been addressed through knowledge management, to identify the pain points and find resolution.
- There is a need to distribute knowledge management functions across the board. Knowledge should be integrated in the project cycles as well as in the organizational culture.
- In terms of demonstrating impact, it is important to first identify and collate the common challenges, particularly in the space of DRI. These issues cannot be solved without collaboration, without linking knowledge available to these common problems.
- Technological advances from AI to geospatial data, machine learning and natural language processing can be leveraged to sift and mine huge amounts of information 'noise' and generate knowledge towards action.
- There is a clear need for an inclusive, neutral multistakeholder knowledge platform, enabling the creation of networks of practice in the search for actionable solutions in resilient infrastructure.

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JOINING HANDS FOR RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE



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