DIGITAL INFORMATION SERVICES
AT THE
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Digital Libraries Conference
1-3 July, 2009 Addis Ababa
Established in 1964, AfDB’s mission is to mobilize resources to finance projects & programs for Africa’s economic & social development
The AfDB Group has

- 77 Member Countries (MCs)
- Board of Directors: 18 members
- President + 5 VPs
- 1,200 Staff
- 24 Field Offices
Knowledge Generation and Management is an important pillar in AfDB’s activities.

Through lending, grants, technical assistance and policy advice, AfDB has a distinct comparative advantage in generating and disseminating knowledge to support its operations.

AfDB Seeks to position itself as the ‘Knowledge Bank for Africa’.
Our approach to knowledge management embraces the definition of KM as

“The creation and subsequent management of an environment which encourages knowledge to be created, shared, learnt, enhanced, organized and utilized for the benefit of the Bank and MCs”.
Following the establishment of the Office of the Chief Economist in 2005, there has been a radical change in the way we deliver information:

the Bank Library changed its name to:

The Knowledge & Virtual Resources Center (KVRC)
Our motto is

“More than Just a Library”.

We continue to acquire and disseminate information in print but increasingly in digital formats.

Our vision is to provide the right information at the right time to meet the specific information needs of each individual client.
In addition to conventional library services, our users now have full access to a myriad of digital resources including
- Economist.
- Development Business.
- EBSCOhost.
- NewsBank.
- Africa Investor.
- IC Publications.
- Africa – Asia Confidential.
- Les Afriques.
- Financial Times.
- Indigo Publications.
- Jstor.
- IngentaConnect.
- British Library.
- Institut of Development Studies.
- World Bank Documents & Reports.
- United Nations Documents.

**Full-Text Electronic Documents of International Organizations**

- IDRC Reports.
- World Bank E-Library.
- OECD E-Library.
- Oxford Analytica.
- Business Monitor International.
- Economist Intelligence Unit.
- Armed Conflict Database.
- ISI Emerging Markets.
- Institute of International Finance.
- International Country Risk Guide.
- Standard & Poors ratings
- Fitch Ratings
- Global Insights Reports
- FAO Statistical Database.
- International Development Statistics.
- UN Commodity Trade Statistics.
- World Development Indicators Global Development Finance.
- International Financial Statistics (IFS).
- The World of Learning.

- Oxford English Dictionary.

- Blackwell Books Online.
• Africa Institute of South Africa.


• Center for Development and the Environment.

• Center for the Studies of African Economies.

• International Institute for Environment and Development.

• National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Africa News.
- Business Report (South Africa).
- **Access to Online African Newspapers**
- El – Akhbar (Egypt).
- Assabah (Morocco).
- L’Intelligent d’Abidjan (Côte - d’Ivoire).
To facilitate information storage, searching and retrieval, we use VTLS VIRTUA IMS which includes a platform access our online resources.
The feedback we receive from the users suggests that our information resources and services are Adequate, up-to-date, prompt and highly relevant to their needs. And we are improving continuously:

We systematically identify, procure, and maintain resources that are deemed to be relevant to Bank management, operations and research needs.
Building on our current achievements, available technologies, resources and excellent collaborative working relationships with numerous information institutions, KVRC is well suited to become a basic component of an African Digital Information Network/Consortium.
Our long term objective is to become the regional depository of development information in Africa. Over the next three years, our strategic ambitions are

- We will explore new ways of delivering and doing more to reach new users.
- We will interact more closely with our users (including field offices and RMCs) both online and face-to-face, listen to their concerns and understand their information needs.

- We will seek networking arrangements with external information institutions for sharing information and experiences.

- We will be doing more to showcase our services to encourage more users to access and utilize AfDB knowledge products.
We will be putting increasing efforts to develop our skills, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, as a means of improving the quality of our services.
Professionally trained staffs with high skills in information management are essential for converting knowledge into a format that can be communicated, shared and stored. KVRC is currently severely deficient in these skills.

- Internet connection is still slow in many African countries. This causes a lot of frustration to the users who need to download large volumes of data or documents.
The cost of and demand for information resources are increasing day after day. We need to convince management to allocate more financial resources to provide high quality information services.

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There is a growing need to train users on how to access and utilize online digital resources.
In summary

In this digital area, KM involves connecting people with people, as well as people with information.

We have reached an important milestone along the way to becoming a full-fledged digital information facility.
We are prepared to work in partnership with other organizations in Africa and world-wide in order to facilitate the development of an All-Africa Digital Information Network Utility.
The AfDB is ideally suited to take a central role in such an initiative
Thank you

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