

First Steps in strategic planning: Results of the online survey

Summary points for APC 2012 Online Regional Discussion

Strategic Planning for 2013-16 : 6-17 August 2012

Overview

During July 2012 the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) conducted an online survey of its Board, Council members, staff and some partner organisations as the first step in the 2013-2016 Strategic Planning process. A total of 39 completed responses were received from across the groups. A full report on the survey results is available in PDF on apc.org at: <https://www.apc.org/en/node/14931>.

Short summaries have been prepared from the full report to help frame topics and subtopics in each of the five regional online discussions. Where applicable, the summaries appear directly under related topic headings. Should you have any questions regarding the summaries or full report, please contact Chat or Elly at chat@apcwomen.org or apcintern@apc.org.

Topic 3.1 Looking Back: Implementation of 2009-12 plan by APC members

Report summary: APC's online survey asked members to rate their own performance of the 2008-12 Strategic Plan period. Members' observations relate to the external Key Result Areas (KRAs) included in the existing Strategic Plan as follows:

- KRA 1: Affordable Internet access for all [Access]
- KRA 2: Using emerging technologies for social change [Emerging technology]
- KRA 3: Making technology work for environmental sustainability [Environment]
- KRA 4: Building the "information commons" [Info commons]
- KRA 5: Securing and defending Internet rights [Internet rights]
- KRA 6: Improving governance, including the governance of the Internet [Governance]

Members were most positive about their performance related to the KRAs Emerging technology (KRA 2), Info commons (KRA 4) and Internet rights (KRA 5). Examples of successful work related to Emerging technology (KRA 2) came from virtually all regions. Among others, members remarked on their use of free and open source software as a reason for high rankings; members also remarked on their use of open source software (as well as Creative Commons licensing) when discussing performance on Info commons (KRA 4). Several members rated their performance in Internet rights (KRA 5) highly ("excellent" or "good"). Other members commented on their work related to specific Internet rights campaigns or projects including, for example, APC's Take Back The Tech!.

Members were less positive about the KRAs Access (KRA 1) and Governance (KRA 6). Both Access (KRA 1) and Governance (KRA 6) received some "nil performance" rankings, which may indicate that the respondents' organisations did not focus on the issue. There were a few examples of successful work related to Access (KRA 1) provided by members in Africa and South Asia. These examples often included the provision of free- or low-cost Internet service and/or training.

To calculate the composite score for the KRA ratings, all 'Excellent' responses were allocated a 2, 'Good' responses were allocated 1, 'Moderate' responses were allocated 0, 'Bad' responses were allocated -1, and 'Nil performance' responses were allocated -2. These allocated scores were then summed to arrive at an overall score for each KRA. Overall, respondents ranked their performance as follows, from highest to lowest:

- KRA 2: Emerging technology 33
- KRA 5: Internet rights 24
- KRA 4: Info commons 23
- KRA 6: Governance 18

- KRA 3: Environment 15
- KRA 1: Access 14

Topic 3.2 Looking Back: Implementation of 2009-12 plan by APC

Report summary: This summary briefly reviews respondents' experience and assessment of APC's performance over the 2009-12 Strategic Plan period. The observations relate to Key Result Areas (KRAs) – this time, both internal and external – included in the existing Strategic Plan, and related activities. Internal KRAs are:

- KRA 7 : Mobilising Resources
- KRA 8: Network development and governance [Network development]

There were a relatively large number of "don't know" answers to this section of the survey, as well as some non-responses. Respondents were not given examples of APC's work to guide their responses and had to rely on what they knew or could look up. This probably means that members are generally only familiar with those areas of APC that they participate in directly. In particular, there were low levels of knowledge of APC's work on Info commons (KRA 4) and Environmental sustainability (KRA 3).

Respondents were most pleased with APC's performance on Internet rights (KRA 5), Governance (KRA 6) and Emerging technology (KRA 2). Motivations for many high ratings on Internet rights (KRA 5) and Governance (KRA 6) referred to APC's lead or widely-recognised role in these areas globally. Specifically related to Internet rights (KRA 5), respondents commented on APC's work on the Internet Rights Charter, GISWATCH and other projects. A clear motivator for many "excellent" ratings on APC's performance on Emerging technology (KRA 2) was the innovative work done in the Take Back the Tech! campaign, including the use of Ushahidi.

Respondents were less positive about Info commons (KRA 4) and the internal KRAs – Mobilising resources (KRA 7) and Network development and governance (KRA 8). (It should be noted, however, that there were fewer respondents to questions regarding the internal KRAs.) While members remarked on the number of documents and online resources APC had produced to promote the use of open licenses and FOSS under Info commons (KRA 4), some respondents did not understand what this KRA really "meant".

Overall, respondents ranked APC's performance as follows, from highest to lowest:

- KRA 5: Internet rights 66
- KRA 6: Governance 56
- KRA 2: Emerging technology 35
- KRA 1: Access 33
- KRA 3: Environment 31
- KRA 4: Info commons 27
- KRA 8: Network development 23
- KRA 7: Mobilising resources 22

Topic 4.1 Moving Ahead: Future strategic priorities

Report summary: This summary briefly reviews respondents' feedback on the future relevance the following items:

- APC's current mission, vision, principles and strategic vision
- APC's current KRAs to members
- APC's current KRAs to APC, as an organisation
- APC's current cross-cutting goals

Mission, vision, principles

Generally, respondents agreed that APC's current mission, vision and principles would still be appropriate for the future period 2013-16. However, three respondents disagreed that the current strategic vision was still appropriate for the next strategic plan while a further 12 said that they were unsure.

Members' scores of KRAs for their own organisations

All members said that Emerging technology (KRA 2) would continue to be important for their own organisation in the future. A handful of members, however, noted that Access (KRA 1) was or would be declining in importance for their organisation. Several responses explained lower importance accorded to access to the fact that access was now widespread and cheaper than before.

To calculate the composite score for questions where the response options were 'Very important', 'Important' and 'Not important', each 'Very important' response was allocated a 2, each 'Important' score was allocated a 1, and each 'Not important' score was allocated a zero. These allocated scores were then summed to arrive at an overall score for each item.

Members scored the future importance of KRAs to them as follows:

- KRA 2: Emerging technology 43
- KRA 5: Internet rights 43
- KRA 6: Governance 38
- KRA 3: Environment 36
- KRA 4: Info commons 35
- KRA 1: Access 30

When asked to give a rationale for their scores, only 11 members elected to do so. Most members who did give a rationale for their ranking indicated that certain KRAs were emphasised in their own organisation's strategic plan.

Respondents' scores of KRAs for APC

All respondents were also asked whether or not the current KRAs were important for APC to focus on in the future. Overall, they scored the future importance of the KRAs to APC as follows:

- KRA 5: Internet rights 66
- KRA 6: Governance 61
- KRA 2: Emerging technology 59
- KRA 4: Access 55
- KRA 3: Environment 54
- KRA 1: Info commons 53

Notable is that there were fewer "not important" ratings for Access (KRA 1) than when members rated the importance for their own organisation. Some open-ended responses further explained the importance of access as a right, and that access forms the basis for action on other KRAs.

Suggestions for new KRAs

More than half of all survey respondents had suggestions for new KRAs for the future period 2013-16. While some of the suggestions (e.g. "Access" and "Affordability") are already captured in the current KRAs, others were completely new. Some suggestions included:

- Regional focus areas
- Gender and women's rights

- Language, with varying definitions (e.g. language disabilities, linguistic barriers as related to access) – Note, one respondent suggested that Language could be a cross-cutting goal
- Internet and economic distribution/social justice

APC's cross-cutting goals

Respondents generally felt that APC's cross-cutting goals should be retained, perhaps with some additions such as diversity, human rights or using technology for social change. Some further suggested that the KRAs Environmental sustainability (KRA 3) and Info commons (KRA 4) could be made cross-cutting goals.

Topic 4.2 Moving Ahead: APC-wide activities

Report summary: Member organisations rated the five APC-wide campaigns and activities that were included in the 2008-12 strategic plan. They were asked how important each was for their organisation. The responses also indicated how many members did not know about particular APC-wide activities. The members' scores were:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| • Internet Rights and Awareness | 42 |
| • Global Information Society Watch | 41 |
| • Take Back the Tech! | 34 |
| • APC's Action Research Network | 30 |
| • The Rapid Response Network | 29 |

Some member suggestions for new APC-wide campaigns and activities were given and included:

- An activity around Greening IT
- More concrete activities related to environmental sustainability
- Opposition to capitalist mode of operations and questioning of economic aspects in the interests of developing countries
- Work to support and evaluate micro and social enterprises
- Adoption of a view of development as a comprehensive model rather than issue based
- Some suggestions were specifically tied to member collaboration and knowledge sharing:
- Better and joint dissemination of APC research-projects-learning
- Inter-member, regional, or sub-regional member interaction with APC learnings so as to increase impact
- Member exchange programme