

**Association for Progressive Communications
APC Event Planning Process
March 2007**

APC introduced a systematic approach to event planning in 2002. It has evolved over time, and will continue to do so.

As APC participates in or hosts anywhere between 60 and 100 events per year, a systematic approach to event identification (which events we should participate in, and why), engagement (what we will do at the event and why), collaboration (who will participate and why) and follow-up (what happens after) is critical in ensuring our financial and human resources are allocated effectively and in accordance with APC's strategy.

Deciding which events to participate in is guided by APC's strategic priorities. Staff identify particular events which respond to programme and management system 'key result areas' (KRAs) (please see APC's 2004-2008 Action plan for Strategic priorities and programme/system KRAs].

Programmes discuss participation in events during meetings and online if necessary, but normally, annual forward planning takes place during a face to face meeting, and is adjusted for events which are unforeseen.

Members are encouraged to share information about events they feel are strategic for APC. This interaction is between members and staff, and through discussion about items to be included in APCNews items and insideAPC – an internal newsletter.

Partners are often an important source of information about events which APC might not be aware of, or that APC has not prioritised. For example, events on community radio, alternative media, IPR (intellectual property rights) and FOSS. Although these areas are all very important in APC's work, we are not centrally located in the networks around these issues.

Each programme has its own partners, and some partnerships impact on all programmes, e.g. AWID (Association for Women's Rights in Development), BCO (Building Communications Opportunities), CRIS (Communications Rights in the Information Society), Internet Governance Forum (preceded by Working Group on Internet Governance), GKP (Global Knowledge Partnership) and others.

APC community

All event information is then centralised into an annual calendar, maintained by network development staff (network development is a management system known as 'membership development and participation prior and networking and advocacy' prior to 2006), which keeps notes of date, location, staff/members attending, URL and additional information. The calendar of events normally covers events for at least 12-16 months in advance.

Communications/media staff are also closely involved in this by sharing events information with staff and members on a bi-monthly basis and following up with attendees after events to get reports for internal and external use.

Specific event planning

As an event approaches, staff will initiate a discussion about the event in the relevant space (normally a mailinglist, which could link to a wiki or intranet if there is significant planning involved). This discussion will address the particular nature of the event in terms of our objectives, who is most appropriate to

participate, which partners are attending, what activities we might host and which we would approach partners for potential collaboration. It is a very pro-active process and contributes significantly to what we feel ensures the greatest benefit from event participation in terms of:

- responding to our strategic priorities and KRAs
- including and building relationships with partners
- providing visibility and opportunity for members
- promotion of APC's work and distribution of publications
- media strategy
- content development
- network building

We have an internal event planning document format which includes information about APC's focal point (APC person responsible for the team and onsite coordination); logistics person (who looks after preparations for participants); partners attending; and content (e.g. workshops, panels, trainings, etc.).

Events and partners

Linking to the Building Communications Opportunities Alliance

A good example of how this process works was the AMARC 9 conference that was held in Jordan in late 2006. Through BCO, APC knew about this event from early in the year. The BCO coordinator encouraged all BCO partners to prioritise this event. Supported by BCO, APC pro-actively outreached to AMARC to propose collaboration, culminating in APC hosting two workshops at the event: wireless networking training and Gender Evaluation Methodology.

We have a similar approach to including BCO partners in APC events. When APC hosted a regional ICT policy training event in Nairobi in 2004, APC asked BCO partners IICD and One World to identify who among their African partners we should include in the event.

During the WSIS process, APC worked very intentionally during preparatory and regional meetings to ensure the inclusion of APC members, and of WNSP (Women's Networking Support Programme), CIPP (Communications and Information Policy Programme) and BCO partners in collaborative work. Among others we worked with One World South Asia (supporting them in their efforts to have grassroots women from India attend events in India, e.g. by arranging for a journalist to interview these women and publishing the interviews on the APC website), AMARC, and in also with CIDA, SDC and DFID at the level of influencing country delegations. A highlight was when the Canadian delegation held up an APC t-shirt in a government plenary in 2003. The APC WNSP t-shirt was produced to expose the WSIS's backtracking on gender equality.

The WNSP regularly holds GEM (Gender Evaluation Methodology) training workshops in many countries around the world, and several of these have included GKP, CRIS and BCO partners quite intentionally. The same process of inclusion of partners apply to other capacity building activity, such as the community wireless networking training in Africa, and the ICT policy workshops in Africa, Latin America, and South Asia.

There are several other examples, and this type of collaboration is always reflected in our BCO 6 monthly reports.

END