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National Recordal System
IK holder catalogue process

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AIM OF THE POSTER

The aim of this poster is to illustrate the South African National Recordal Systems (NRS) process whereby Indigenous Knowledge (IK) holder's information is captured in a registry, as specified in South Africa's Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Policy, through an IK cataloguing process.

INTRODUCTION

The National Indigenous Knowledge Systems Policy was adopted by the South African government in 2004, and laid the platform for the recognition, affirmation, development and protection of IKS in South Africa. The IKS policy states[1]: "In order to secure rights to knowledge, a recordal system needs to be put in place where communities, guilds and other IK holders can record their knowledge holdings in order to assist their interest in future economic benefits and social good, based on IK."

Subsequently, the South African Department of Science and Technology (DST) created a National Indigenous Knowledge Systems Office (NIKSO) that is taking the lead on interfacing IKS with other recognised knowledge holders with the aim to provide critical opportunities for new products and services development.

One of the prioritised responsibilities of NIKSO is to establish a national IK register whereby IK holders and their knowledge claims can be recorded as part of the NRS.

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITIES

The NRS aims to offer a number of benefits to various stakeholders that range from rural communities, general public, government departments, scientists to international organisations such as the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

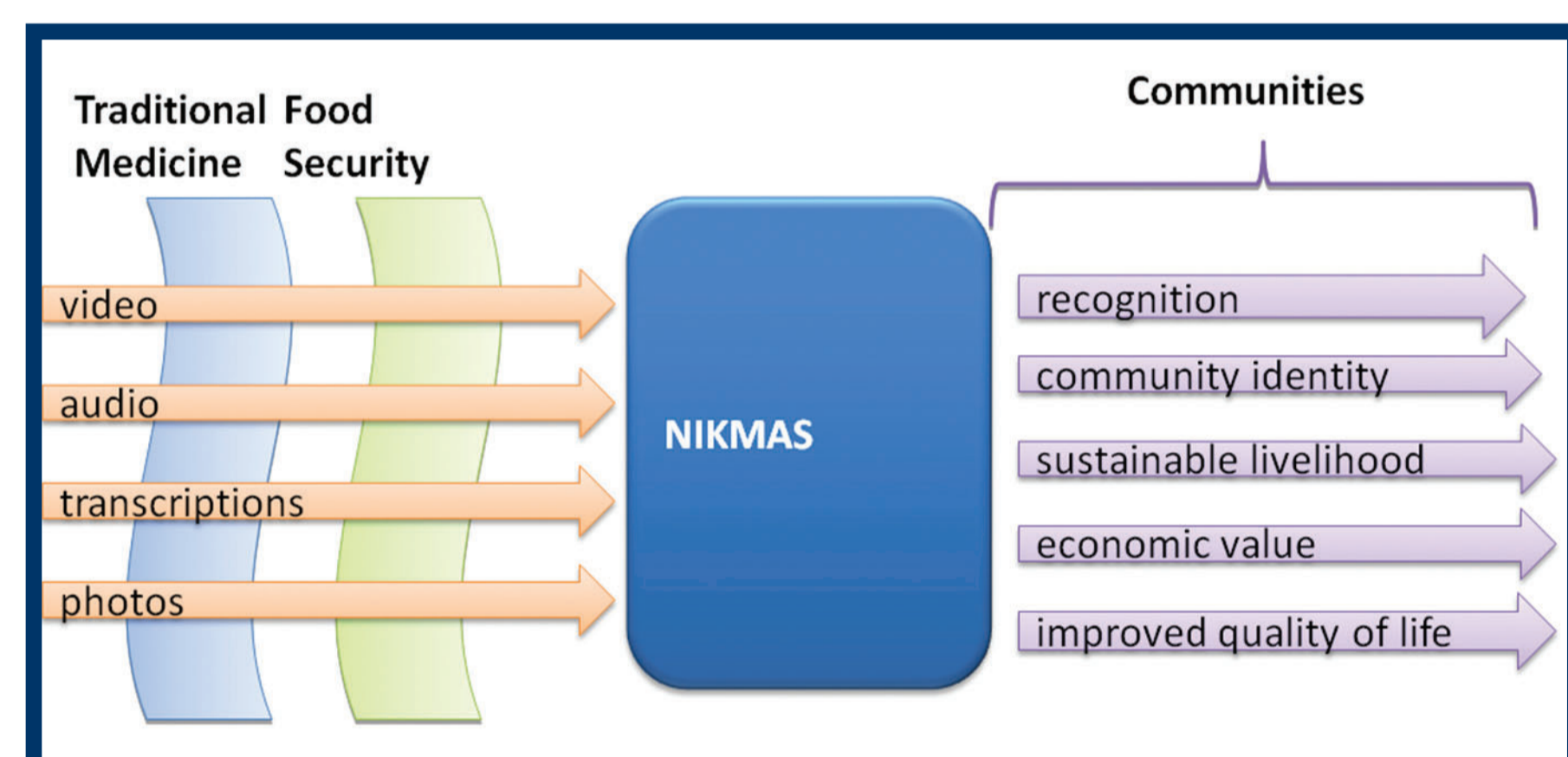The benefits, as articulated by the communities themselves, are illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Rural community benefits

NRS IK HOLDER CATALOGUE

The catalogue process aims to develop an IK registry that captures IK holder information, their knowledge claims and their location.

The catalogue will firstly serve as a register that will identify the knowledge holders and practitioners in various indigenous knowledge fields, and secondly to facilitate the recording and documentation of IK for the preservation and protection against unauthorised access to data, for instance commercial exploitation, distortion and fraudulent acts.

The first version of the catalogue process was developed for the Indigenous Knowledge Systems Documentation Centre (IKSDC), located at the University of Zululand, and was tested in one of three communities that are linked to this IKSDC.

The IKSDC serves as the local hub for NRS-related activities. An IKSDC coordinator and curator will be responsible for coordinating and managing IK activities within the communities, and to ensure the relevance and quality of IK data captured. **Figure 2** illustrates the collaboration between the IKSDC and the community.
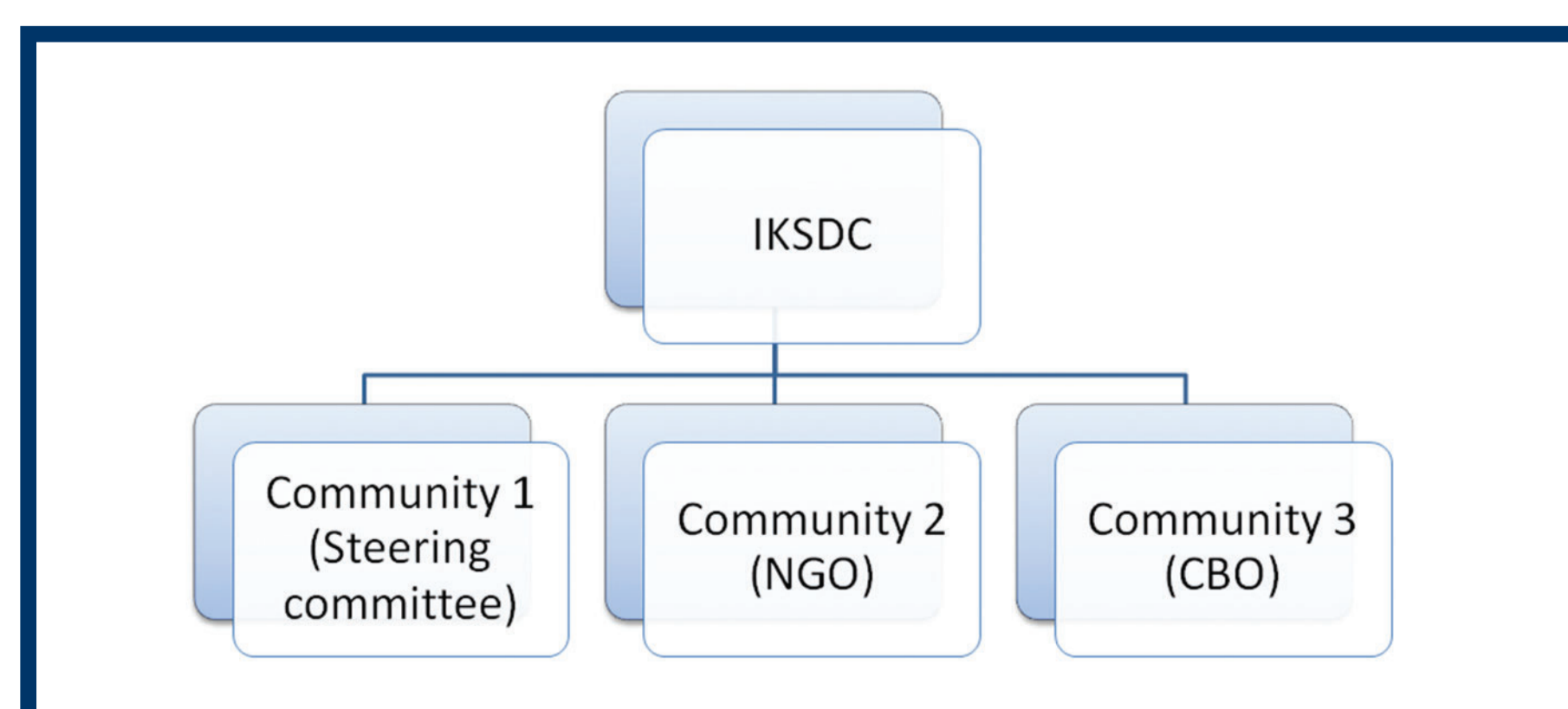

Figure 2: IKSDC and community organisations

For a community to participate in the NRS initiative, the Traditional/Tribal Authority is required to establish a legal entity that represents the community. The ownership of the catalogue process is then transferred to the representative body. It is also possible for a representative body to represent more than one community.

THE CATALOGUE PROCESS

The catalogue process was defined to encourage community ownership of the IK activities, whilst keeping an active audit trail to protect the communities and IK holders against bio-piracy[2]. The IK audit trail will ensure that IK holders and communities are not locked out of any potential socio-economic benefits that may flow from their respective IK.

One of the first activities when establishing a new representative body in a community is to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) between the IKSDC and the entity. This NDA ensures confidentiality of all the information collected through the catalogue process. **Figure 3** illustrates the high level NRS catalogue process.
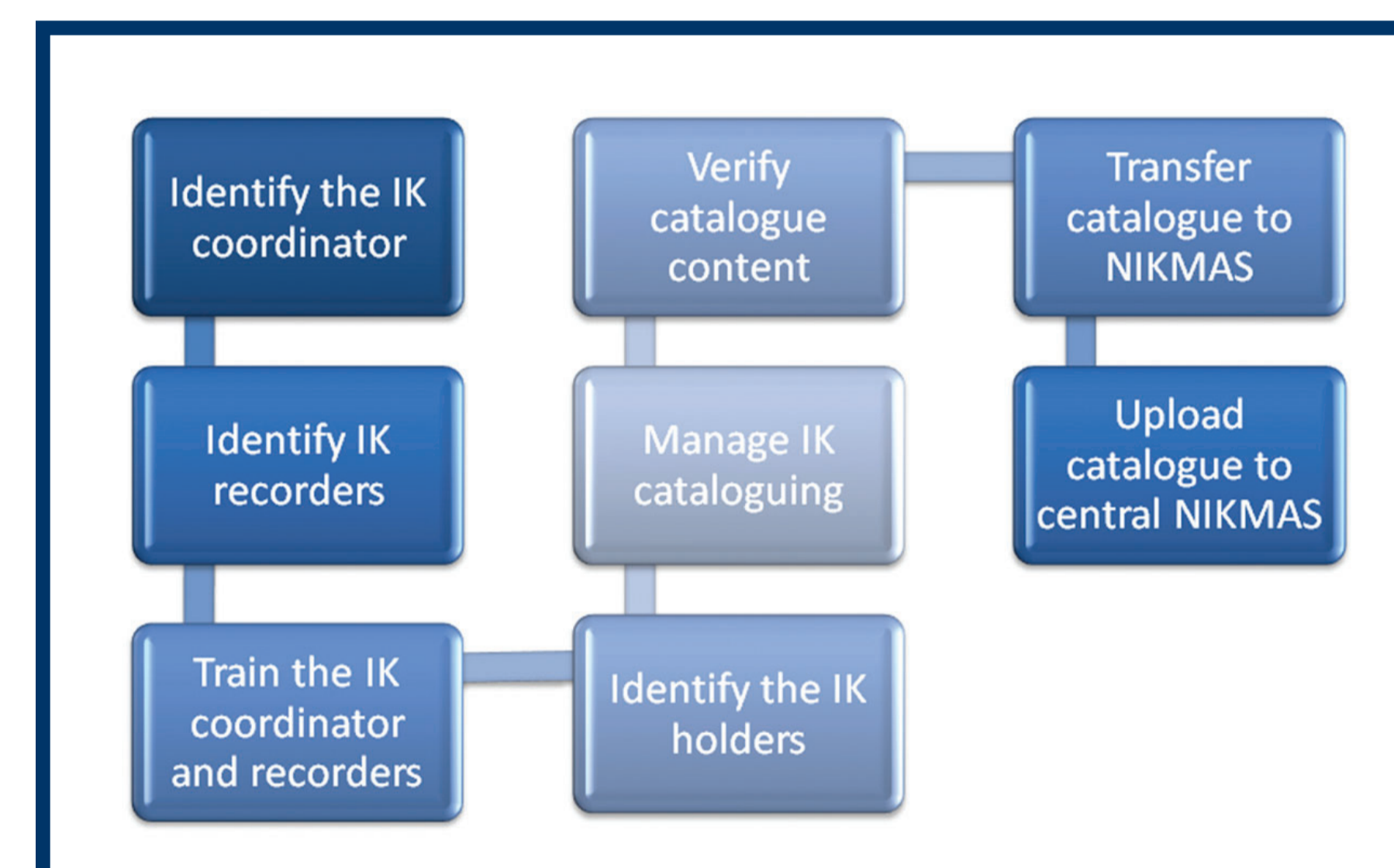

Figure 3: NRS catalogue process

CONCLUSION

This process was developed to facilitate consistency in creating a registry of IK holders and their respective areas of expertise. It embeds quality and trust into the process so that the registry of IK holders can be used to record and document IK. The audit trail introduced in the process will facilitate responsible exploitation of this knowledge, ultimately for the socio- and /or economic benefit of the IK holder and his/her community.

The NRS IK holder catalogue model is developed as a generic guideline and should be adapted according to the specific IKSDC and community needs and structure whilst keeping the audit trail intact. Future enhancements of the process should consider the use of electronic questionnaires and multi-media to digitally support the IK recorders and facilitate the audit process. Finally, the catalogue process, was developed as part of a Living Lab approach[3] that is being followed on the greater NRS initiative. This process allows active participation of community members in the innovation process and may result in this process evolving as the project participants gain experience and learn from the various communities involved.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

REFERENCES

[1]   South Africa. Department of Science and Technology. 2004. Indigenous Knowledge Systems Policy. Pretoria
[2]   Global Exchange. 2001. Biopiracy a new threat to Indigenous Rights and Culture in Mexico.
[3]   Eriksson, Mats; Niitamo, Veli-Pekka; Kulkki Seija. 2005. State of the art in utilizing Living Labs approach to user centric ICT innovation – a European approach.

The NRS aims to offer a number of benefits to various stakeholders that range from rural communities, general public, government departments, scientists to international organisations.

Documenting Indigenous Knowledge in food security and African Traditional Medicine

Preserving Indigenous Knowledge for future generations