Adapting to the Times: NAS’ Transition to Virtual Meetings

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WHEN C-19 HIT

- Late February 2020
- Late March—NAS Secretariat was closed; called for a national lockdown
- National lockdown
- Working from home and “homing from work”

Questions:
- How does the team keep working?
- How do we keep engaging stakeholders?
THE TRANSITION

- Exploring the options
- Decided on the Zoom platform
- Started using Zoom
  - team meetings
  - other internal meetings
- Learnt while doing
Adapting... The First Test

- NAS COVID-19 Webinar Series
- Webinar 1 - integrating science into the response
- Zoom’s Webinar Add-on
- Registration link
- Publicized across our network, social media, traditional media
- Significant interest/ captive audience
The First Webinar

- August 2020
- 140 attendees, 4 speakers, 2 hours
- Format:
  - Practice session with speakers
  - 40 minutes of presentations,
  - Questions and answers/Discussion
ADAPTING....

- Confidence and capacity grew
- Other virtual events in September
  - Virtual Media Roundtable- “The COVID-19 Pandemic and You”
    - separating facts from fiction
  - NAS COVID-19 Webinar 2- “Building a Resilient Higher Education System in Nigeria”
    - discussing the impacts of COVID-19 on tertiary education
    - strategies for building resilience in face of possible future disease outbreaks
Adapting… a new challenge

- Bilingual virtual meetings (English and French)
- Disseminating policy briefs on COVID-19
  - October 2020
  - Partners: ANSALB, GAAS, ANSAL-BF, and ANSTS
  - 4 webinars
- Stakeholders' webinar on science advice in health emergencies
  - December 2020
  - Partnered with ANSALB, NYA
- Zoom’s interpretation feature
- Interesting first 10 minutes of the first webinar
LESSONS LEARNT

- Total transition might not be the case; but can be just as effective
  - Ease of convening and participation
  - In built support (Zoom)- registration management, meeting reports, reminders, polling, post attendees urls, integrations with social media

- Conversely; cons:
  - Zoom fatigue
  - Distractions /holding attention (time)
  - Cost of participation
  - Some return to normalcy; converting registrants to participants
THANK YOU