Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe

Communication Plan

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Keywords

Knowledge, Knowledge Management, Management, KM, MGMT, Knowledge Sharing, Sharing, Knowledge Creation, Creation, Knowledge Discovery, Discovery, Knowledge Storage, Storage, Knowledge Curation, Curation, Information, Data, Data Curation, Capacity Development, Capacity, Development, Research for Development, R4D

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Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe (SKiM)

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Report

A report is a separately published record of research findings, research still in progress, policy developments and events, or other technical findings, usually bearing a report number and sometimes a grant number assigned by the funding agency. Also, an official record of the activities of a committee or corporate entity, the proceedings of a government body, or an investigation by an agency, whether published or private, usually archived or submitted to a higher authority, voluntarily or under mandate. In a more general sense, any formal account of facts or information related to a specific event or phenomenon, sometimes given at regular intervals. *Source:* COAR

About ICARDA

Established in 1977, the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) is a non-profit, CGIAR Research Center that focusses on delivering innovative solutions for sustainable agricultural development in the nontropical dry areas of the developing world. We provide innovative, science-based solutions to improve the livelihoods and resilience of resource- poor smallholder farmers. We do this through strategic partnerships, linking research to development, and capacity development, and by taking into account gender equality and the role of youth in transforming the non-tropical dry areas.

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Abbreviations

ARC Sudan	Agricultural Research Corporation – Sudan
CACILM	Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management
CCU IFAD	Central Coordination Unit for IFAD Projects Implementation
CPIU IFAD	Consolidated IFAD Programme Implementation Unit
ENA-Meknes	National School for Agriculture – Meknes
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IAV Hassan II	Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary "Hassan II"
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
IDIS Viitorul	Institutul pentru Dezvoltare și Inițiative Sociale "Viitorul"
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INRA	National Institute of Agricultural Research
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
KM	Knowledge Management
KS	Knowledge Sharing
MARDE	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning
MoANR	Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources
ONCA	Office National du Conseil Agricole

Introduction

The communication plan is designed to support the two main objectives of the IFAD-funded initiative "Strengthening knowledge management for greater development effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe":

- Enhancing the knowledge management (KM) skills of key rural institutions and other stakeholders in Moldova, Morocco and Sudan
- Fostering and promoting knowledge exchange across in-country, cross-country and transregional partners to facilitate improved knowledge uptake, transfer, and management.

The plan reflects the principles and recommendations set out in IFAD's Strategy for Knowledge Management[1], recognizing that effective KM can play a critical role in the promotion of new solutions to tackle rural poverty, and understanding that KM must be rooted in core competencies and embedded in the work processes, cultures and mindsets of organizations to be effective. The plan provides a framework that outlines strategies to implement the following outcomes.

Directly-targeted outcomes

- **Strong and effective learning systems:** involving stakeholders in the collection, packaging, and promotion of new or currently inaccessible or poorly organized knowledge will help to improve their understanding of KM processes and practices. Some information products will be designed to capture this learning, providing valuable learning resources for knowledge management staff[2] – in both participating institutions and countries, and other low- and middle-income countries with similar KM challenges.
- I**ntegration of KM processes and practices:** enhanced awareness of, and involvement in the collection, packaging and dissemination of new and currently inaccessible knowledge will encourage knowledge managers to embed proven KM practices into their work.

Additional outcomes

- **Strategic promotion of knowledge to decision makers, donors and development organizations:** the collection, packaging and strategic promotion of information to target audiences in the development sector will help get 'research results and best practices into use,' particularly related to the interests and needs of women and youth - two priority groups targeted by the initiative.
- **Strategic promotion of knowledge to farmers and rural communities:** the collection, packaging and strategic promotion of information will support the transfer of new technologies, practices and strategies to farmers and rural communities – enhancing productivity, natural resource management, climate resilience, and employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth in rural areas.
- **Enhanced confidence in the reliability of new knowledge:** the packaging and strategic dissemination of knowledge in the form of information products can enhance confidence in the reliability of this information, increasing its use.

Structure of the communication plan

The plan addresses three main questions: Who can the initiative influence directly? What are the intended outcomes? What communication activities, products, and services will the initiative create to reach its goals and objectives?
It is structured into four main sections: Section 1 defines the initiative's target audiences; Section 2 outlines the main communication activities and information products; Section 3 details a timeline; and Section 4 sets out the personnel needed to implement the communication plan.

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[1] IFAD (2007). IFAD Strategy for Knowledge Management. Italy: Rome. Accessible here:
https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/90/docs/EB-2007-90-R-4.pdf
[2] Knowledge managers refers to individuals in participating institutions who collect, package or promote knowledge. It does not refer to a specific job or position.

1. Target audiences

Knowledge managers in participating institutions

The communication plan will involve partner institution knowledge managers so they can raise their capacities to collect, package and disseminate knowledge more effectively. Knowledge managers will also benefit from the development of information products providing guidance on standard KM processes so that best practices can be embedded into their work.

Participating institutions

Moldova: Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment (MARDE); Research Institute of Field Crops "Selectia"; State Agrarian University; Institute for Development and Social Initiatives – IDIS Viitorul; Consolidated Programme Implementation Unit (CPIU-IFAD).

Morocco: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests; Institut National de la Recherche Agonomique (INRA) (National Institute of Agricultural Research); Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Hassan II (IAV Hassan II); National Office for Agricultural Extension (ONCA); National School of Agriculture (ENA-Meknes).

Sudan: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MOAF); Agricultural Research Corporation (ARC); University of Khartoum – Faculty of Agriculture; Knowledge Society; Central Coordination Unit (CCU-IFAD). Maybe a sentence that project is open to include other partner institutions in the course of implementation e.g. farmers organisations

Knowledge managers and users of information in non-participating institutions

The communication plan will generate information products that are international public goods, accessible to knowledge managers in other institutions and low to medium-income countries via the online knowledge hub. These knowledge managers will benefit from their involvement in the initiative and the information, insights, and lessons it generates. Equally, other users of information will benefit from the insights and lessons learned – which will inform their work processes and increase their productivity and efficiency.

Main donor: International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Communication activities will target the donor – IFAD – to provide updates on the progress of the initiative and demonstrate impacts and milestones. Communicating lessons learned and the effectiveness of knowledge management processes will also help inform the development of other IFAD-funded knowledge management initiatives.

Rural communities and farmers

Collecting, creating, packaging information, and promoting new knowledge to rural communities and farmers will strengthen technology transfer, the adoption of new strategies and solutions to enhance rural development and climate resilience. In particular, the initiative will prioritize the targeting of two marginalized groups: rural women and youth.

Development institutions and decision makers

Collecting, creating packaging information, and promoting new knowledge to development institutions, donors and decision makers will encourage investments in KM and new solutions and technologies to enhance rural development and strengthen climate resilience.

2. Communication Activities

The following section outlines communication activities and information products that a) provide visibility for the initiative, b) raise capacity and help embed KM practices into organizational processes, c) capture, package and disseminate new knowledge. Outputs are grouped according to four main activities 1) initial promotional activities, 2) strengthening KM capacities and skills, 3) strengthening knowledge exchange, 4) knowledge dissemination.

A. Initial promotional activities	
Brochure	**Purpose:** creating visibility for the initiative during its initial launch. **Proposed format:** A5-sized; 1-2 pages; clearly outlining aims, objectives and activities. **Target audiences:** Donors, general audience. **Estimated reach:** 200+ people.
Web section	**Purpose:** providing an overview of the initiative: its main aims and objectives; KM activities; donors and partners; news and events; and relevant information products. **Proposed format:** Hosted on the ICARDA website and adopting the ICARDA 'project' web template. Note: this web-section is distinct from the online information hub discussed below. **Dissemination:** Social media, blogs and e-newsletters. **Target audience:** Donors, general audience. **Estimated reach:** 5,000 visitors.
B. Strengthening KM capacities and skills	
Approach document (Activity 1.2)	**Purpose:** Identifying KM capacity gaps and learning needs (Activity 1.1), and providing a resource to monitor progress towards initiative goals. As an open access international public good the document will become a valuable resource for other institutions facing similar challenges. **Proposed format:** Report of 30-50 pages documenting current KM capacities and processes within participating institutions, with recommendations for enhancing the collection, packaging and dissemination of knowledge. **Dissemination:** small print-run, e-distribution. **Additional notes:** involving stakeholders in the preparation of the approach document would provide an important learning process – identifying knowledge gaps, priorities and needs would help to raise capacities and enhance awareness of KM principles and approaches. **Target audience:** Donors and knowledge managers in participating and non-participating institutions. **Estimated reach:** 600 individuals.

Learning notes/guides (Activities 2.1 and 2.2)	**Purpose:** guides demonstrating how to integrate standard KM strategies into organizational processes and work practices. The guides will act as valuable references for stakeholders, and complement trainings and workshops (Activity 2.1). **Proposed format:** 5-10 pages; A5 with effective use of infographics. The information could also be adapted for online consumption, repurposed as web-pages. **Dissemination:** small print-run; distributed at trainings and workshops; and e-distribution. **Target audience:** Knowledge managers in participating institutions. **Estimated reach:** 600 individuals. **Potential example:** https://app.cdn.lookbookhq.com/production/clients/10243/content/2017-07-27/130327/Guide%20-%20Knowledge%20Management.pdf
C. Strengthening knowledge exchange	
Online knowledge hub (Activity 3.1)	**Purpose:** a central repository of knowledge generated and promoted by the initiative, and a valuable resource that offers rich information and data on new and indigenous practices and technologies to drive more sustainable agriculture and climate change adaptation. Information products can also be repurposed as web-pages for online consumption. Accompanying forums will help to build and strengthen a Community of Practice that shares experiences, impacts and lessons learned. **Format:** An open access platform integrated with Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), containing information described according to international standards: Dublin core, FAO AGROVOC and ISO. **Dissemination:** new information products regularly disseminated via social media and e-newsletters. **Target audiences:** Knowledge managers in participating and non-participating institutions; rural communities and farmers; development practitioners; general audience. **Estimated reach:** 17600 people. **Potential examples:** https://ruralsolutionsportal.org/home http://www.cacilm.org/en/
Working papers (Activity 3.3)	**Purpose:** Capturing and sharing learning on work in progress, documenting the implementation of new KM processes and lessons learned. As an open access international public good the document will become a valuable resource for other institutions facing similar challenges, informing the development of KM practices elsewhere. **Proposed format:** 15-30 pages, designed for rapid completion and dissemination. Information could also be adapted for online consumption. **Dissemination:** small print-run, e-distribution. **Target audiences:** Knowledge managers in participating and non-participating institutions. **Estimated reach:** 600 people/working paper. **Potential examples:** http://repo.mel.cgiar.org/handle/20.500.11766/4715 **Also:** Procasur documents on 'learning routes'

Strategy reports (Activity 3.3)	(1): KM practices and processes **Purpose:** A synthesis of KM practices and processes adopted and validated in participating institutions, written towards the end of the initiative to inform and influence other knowledge managers in non-participating institutions or other low- and middle-income countries. The report will document examples and country experiences to outline a KM plan that can be adapted in other countries where KM capacities are currently low. **Proposed format:** 20-30 pages. **Dissemination:** small print-run, e-distribution. **Target audiences:** Knowledge managers in non-participating institutions. **Estimated reach:** 600 people. (2): Rural development solutions, technologies and practices **Purpose:** A synthesis of new knowledge on rural development solutions, technologies, and practices, generated by participating institutions, written to inform and influence decision makers. **Proposed format:** a 15-20 page 'white paper' or policy synthesis approach giving examples and summarizing experiences. **Dissemination:** small print-run, e-distribution. **Target audiences:** decision makers. **Estimated reach:** 600 people. **Potential example:** https://www.icarda.org/publications-and-resources/research-to-action
Policy, technology and impact briefs (Activity 3.3)	**Purpose:** (1) Policy and technology briefs provide summaries of validated policies, technologies and strategies with the potential to sustainably raise agricultural production and enhance climate change adaptation; (2) Impact briefs will document successes and critical lessons that helped strengthen KM processes in participating institutions. **Proposed format:** 2-page summaries. **Dissemination:** small print-run, e-distribution, repurposed for online information hub as web-pages. **Target audiences:** Rural communities and farmers; development practitioners. **Estimated reach:** 17600 people. **Potential example:** http://www.cacilm.org/docs/CACILM%20%20FS2-2.pdf
Instructional documents (Activity 3.3)	**Purpose:** providing farmers and rural communities with information regarding the benefits of technologies and practices, and guidelines on how they can be applied to generate development impact. **Proposed format:** 5-10 pages with effective use of infographics; translated into national languages; repurposed as web-page for online consumption. **Dissemination:** printed according to need; e-distribution. **Target audiences:** Rural communities and farmers. **Estimated reach:** 17600 people.

Instructional audio-visual/ICT material (Activity 3.3)	**Purpose:** providing farmers and rural communities with information regarding the benefits of technologies and practices, and guidelines on how they can be applied to generate development impact. One potential idea: disseminating information via smartphone apps as a way of involving youth in the initiative's development. **Proposed format:** 5-10 minute videos, animations, infographics. **Dissemination:** uploaded to online information hub; e-distribution. **Target audiences:** Rural communities and farmers. **Estimated reach:** 17600 people. **Potential example:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oy0ZbanzPVc
D. Knowledge dissemination	
Social media (Activity 3.3)	**Purpose:** promoting impacts and information products; maximizing reach to target and general audiences; driving additional traffic to the online information hub. **Strategy:** establishing accounts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn; developing national-specific social media strategies; exploiting partner social media contacts and networks to disseminate information products; regularly measuring reach. **Target audiences:** Donors, knowledge managers in participating and non-participating institutions, rural communities and farmers, external media, general audiences. **Estimated reach:** 17600 people.
E-newsletter (Activity 3.3)	**Purpose:** promoting impacts and information products; maximizing reach to target and general audiences; driving additional traffic to the online information hub. **Strategy:** bi-monthly newsletter with links to new blogs, audio-visual information, and new information products; developed on the 'mailchimp' platform; also disseminated by partner organizations to their networks. **Target audiences:** Donors, knowledge managers in participating and non-participating institutions, external media, general audiences. **Estimated reach:** 17600 people.
Targeted emails (Activity 3.3)	**Purpose:** targeted emails will help to reach specific groups of people who could benefit from the outputs of the initiative. **Strategy:** regular emails with messaging tailored to a target audience; promotion of key outputs (information products, resources, new insights etc.); calls to action. **Target audiences:** Donors, knowledge managers, decision makers. **Estimated reach:** varies according to output and messaging.
External media engagement (Activity 3.3)	**Purpose:** a strategic way of reaching target audiences within participating institutions and countries and beyond; presenting the knowledge collected, packaged and promoted by the initiative; presenting solutions to pressing national and international challenges; calls to action. **Strategy:** national partners to compile and target influential publications and journalists within their countries; international media to be targeted with the help of international partners. **Target audiences:** Donors, knowledge managers in participating and non-participating institutions, external media, general audiences. **Estimated reach:** 20,000+ people.

Blogs (Activity 3.3)	**Purpose:** promoting the success and progress of the initiative to donors and prospective donors; promoting new information products, technologies and solutions; presenting calls to action; driving traffic to the online information hub. **Strategy:** regular blogs posted to the online information hub; blogs posted on partner organization websites and other external websites to maximize reach. **Target audiences:** Donors, knowledge managers in participating and non-participating institutions, external media, general audiences. **Estimated reach:** 20,000 people.
Articles published in peer-reviewed journals (Activity 3.3)	**Purpose:** capture learning from the initiative and contribute this evidence to on-going debates regarding: the weakness of KM capacities within low- and middle-income countries; how KM can be enhanced to support extension and technology transfer. **Strategy:** target high-impact development and agricultural journals with an interest in extension and its challenges. **Target audiences:** policy makers, academics, donors. **Estimated reach:** 1000 people.

3. Timeline and Key Outputs

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTPUT	COMMENTS
Initial promotional activities	Year 1	1. Brochure 2. Web section	Initial promotional activities will provide some visibility for the initiative: offering basic information on aims and objectives, partners, focal points etc.
Strengthening KM capacities and skills	Year 1	1. Approach document 2. Learning notes/guides	The approach document will provide baseline information on KM capacities in participating countries and institutions; a first step towards identifying capacity needs and formulating recommendations.
	Year 2	1. Learning notes/guides	The learning notes/guides guides will target knowledge managers in partner institutions – introducing standard KM processes and practices. They may also be a valuable resource for knowledge managers in other low- and middle-income countries.
	Year 3	1. Learning notes/guides	As the initiative progresses and it accumulates more experience, this learning can be captured in additional learning notes/guides in Years 3.
	Year 4	1. Learning notes/guides	As the initiative progresses and it accumulates more experience, this learning can be captured in additional learning notes/guides in Years 4.
Strengthening knowledge exchange	Year 1	1. Online knowledge hub	The online knowledge hub will form a central information repository where all information generated by the initiative can be uploaded and disseminated. Development will begin in Year 1 and maintenance and further development will be sustained throughout the initiative.
	Year 2	1. Continued development of information hub 2. Working papers 3. Policy, technology and impact briefs	Approaches to KM and enhancing KM processes within participating institutions will provide valuable learning experiences that can be captured in Working Papers. The production of working papers will begin in Year 2 – and this will be sustained throughout the duration of the initiative. Once an inventory of existing knowledge has been compiled, this information will be packaged and disseminated as 'solution-based' briefs. The production of briefs will be sustained throughout the duration of the initiative.
	Year 3	1. Continued development of information hub 2. Working papers 3. Policy, technology and impact briefs 4. Instructional documents 5. Instructional audio-visual material	Once information on new solutions has been collated, packaged and disseminated, instructional documents and audio-visual material will be produced to target farmers and rural communities who will benefit from development gains and enhanced climate change resilience. This exercise will continue into Year 4.

	Year 4	1. Online information hub 2. Working papers 3. Policy, technology and impact briefs 4. Strategy reports (1) (2) 5. Instructional documents 6. Instructional audio-visual material	During the final year of the initiative, when stakeholders can reflect on successes, challenges, and lessons learned a strategy document will help to summarize and synthesize experience – providing a framework that other KM managers in non-participating countries and institutions can refer to and adapt to their own needs.
Knowledge dissemination	Year 1	1. Social media 2. E-newsletter 3. Blogs	Dissemination during Year 1 will try to create some initial visibility for the initiative: communicating KM challenges, aims and objectives, and progress.
	Year 2	1. Social media 2. E-newsletter 3. Blogs	Once information is generated by the initiative, dissemination strategies will regularly deliver new information products to target audiences.
	Year 3	1. Social media 2. E-newsletter 3. Blogs	Once information is generated by the initiative, dissemination strategies will regularly deliver new information products to target audiences.
	Year 4	1. Social media 2. E-newsletter 3. Blogs 4. External media engagement 5. Peer-reviewed articles.	Dissemination strategies will continue throughout the duration of the initiative, and in Year 4 once a large body of evidence has been accumulated, the initiative will also engage with national and international media – promoting the evidence as solutions to drive higher and more sustainable production and strengthen climate resilience. As project managers reflect on challenges and lessons learned this rich body of knowledge should be captured and packaged for peer-reviewed journals so that it can contribute to debates regarding KM and technology transfer.

NOTE: The timeline presented in this table refers to activities in the three initial partner countries: Morocco, Moldova and Sudan. Additional countries may join in successive years.

4. Responsibilities

The table below provides information on the personnel required to implement the initiative's communication strategy. The responsibilities and outputs provided refer only to functions that support communication activities, and not to other aspects of the initiative such as training and workshops. This plan refers only to the identification, packaging and dissemination of knowledge – although this may overlap with other aspects of the initiative.

POSITION	RESPONSIBILITIES	OUTPUTS
1 Project Coordinator	1. Coordinating and overseeing communication and KM activities: strengthening knowledge management skills; enhancing knowledge exchange; and knowledge dissemination. 2. Representing the project at key events and the IFAD-Partner-ICARDA interfaces.	Oversees content and development of all information products.
1 KM Officer	1. Assessing knowledge management capacities 2. Identifying knowledge and capacity gaps in participating institutions/countries, and addressing those gaps.	**Produces/contributes to:** Approach paper on KM; Working papers; Policy, technology and impact briefs; Strategy documents; capacity strengthening guides; instructional audio-visual material.
3 Country Coordinators	1. Assessing existing information and knowledge within participating countries/institutions. 2. Collating existing knowledge stored within participating institutions. 3. Coordinating knowledge dissemination activities: social media, e-newsletters etc.	**Produces/contributes to:** Approach paper on KM; Working papers; Capacity strengthening guides; Instructional documents; Instructional audio-visual material; oversees dissemination within participating countries.
Consultants (Technical, communication, subject matter support/validation, IT support).	1. Providing technical support to help develop the online information hub. 2. Supporting the development and dissemination of information products: writing, editing, design, MEL curation, and targeted promotion of information products.	**Produces/contributes to:** Approach paper on KM; Capacity strengthening guides; Working papers; Policy, technology and impact briefs; instructional documents; instructional audio-visual material; Strategy documents; online information repository.
Institutional Staff	Staff from participating institutions will be embedded within initiative activities to enhance cooperation, facilitate teamwork, and improve competencies.	

Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe (SKiM) is a grant project led by ICARDA and funded by IFAD. The project also works with international partners CIHEAM-Bari, PROCASUR, Virginia Tech as well as NARS, governments, and agricultural extension services in Moldova, Morocco and Sudan.

Initiated in June 2018, the project facilitates and supports KM and capacity development activities in the three selected countries and will provide practical examples of KM best practices that will be analysed and adopted by participating institutions. Increasing the capacities of participating public institutions, by providing necessary structures and systems at the country and regional levels, will ensure that knowledge can be effectively managed for long-term growth and development.

The project website (https://mel.cgiar.org/projects/SKIM) provides background information and describes the project team, partners and stakeholders engaged. The website also shares key documents including the project proposal, and outlines the goals, objectives and impact pathway of the project, as well as additional resources and information on news and events.