IFAD
Investing in rural people

ICARDA
Science for resilient livelihoods in dry areas

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

Steering Committee Meeting, 2019

Minutes

Figure 1: IFAD SKIM Steering Committee Members Group Photo

November 13, 2019

Hosted by: *Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan-II, Rabat, Morocco*

Approved by the Steering Committee Members on 9th December 2019 (online consultation)

CIHEAM
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Introduction

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

Project website https://mel.cgiar.org/projects/SKIM provides the following: background information, a description of the project team in more detail, the partners and stakeholders engaged, key documents and proposal, goals and objectives, impact pathway, focus countries, resources uploaded on website, news and events calendar.

Objectives

The objectives of the meeting are:

A) Presentations by the stakeholders of the yearly initiatives on KM, activities, policies and practices.
B) Presentation of the i) Annual Report ii) Capacity Needs Assessment (CNA) report iii) Country Innovation Plans for Moldova, Morocco and Sudan, and iv) proposed activities for 2020.
C) Discussion, agreement and finalization of the Plan of Work and Budget document.

Participants

The committee includes members from the target countries, co-implementation partners, the funding institution and delegates from the participating countries, with the responsibility to communicate the pre-assessed needs and those newly identified through the actualization of the Innovation Plan writeshops. The participants bring to the table a variety of disciplines interfacing with natural resource management, including backgrounds in social science, economics, information technology, engineering and more.

In attendance:

No.	Name	Institution	Role
1	Ram Sharma	ICARDA	Chair
2	Sanaa Zebakh	Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Hassan II	Morocco host organization - National Project Partner
3	Boris Boincean	Research Institute of Field Crops "Selectia"	Moldova Delegate on behalf of Victor Rosca
4	Mahmoud Awad Mekki	Agriculture Research Corporation	Sudan Delegate
5	Jeffrey Alwang	Virginia Tech	International Partner Delegate - Academia
6	Barbara Massler	Procasur	International Partner Delegate – International NGO
7	Akmal Akramkhanov	ICARDA	Project Leader

Apologies:

No.	Name	Institution	Position
1	Rachid Dahan	institut national de la recherche agronomique (INRA)	Morocco Delegate
2	Damiano Petruzzella	CIHEAM-Bari	International Partner Delegate – Intergovernmental Organization
3	Kholood Farran	IFAD	Donor Representative
4	Victor Rosca	Consolidated Programs Implementation Unit (CPIU-IFAD), Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	Director

Observers:

No.	Name	Institution	Position
1	Mohamed Bouslikhane	IAV Hassan II	National Project Partner - Morocco
2	Enrico Bonaiuti	ICARDA	Monitoring & Evaluation Focal Point
3	Bastian Mueller	ICARDA	Capacity Development Focal Point
4	Valerio Graziano	ICARDA	Knowledge Officer
5	Betty Abrilian	ICARDA	Senior Secretary

Announcements

- Hosting institution (IAV Hassan II of Morocco) is represented by two members welcoming the Steering Committee and ensuring representation from Morocco;
- Damiano Petruzzella and Jocelyne Jawhar from CIHEAM-Bari faced difficulties due to flight delays and joined the next day for the COP and Symposium events;
- Victor Rosca delegated Boris Boincean to represent Moldova in the Steering Committee meeting.

Agenda

Figure 2: IFAD SKIM Steering Committee Meeting

Time	Agenda	Facilitator(s)
09:00 – 09:15	Introduction – About the Project	A. Akramkhanov
09:15 – 09:45	Country Yearly Reports on KM Moldova – B. Boincean Morocco – R. Dahan Sudan – M. Mekki	A. Akramkhanov
09:45 – 10:30	The Capacity Need Assessment and Country Innovation Plans	B. Mueller V. Graziano
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee break	
11:00 – 13:00	The Annual Report and Plan of Work and Budget 2020	A. Akramkhanov E. Bonaiuti
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break	
14:00 – 15:30	The Annual Report and Plan of Work and Budget 2020	A. Akramkhanov E. Bonaiuti
15:30 – 16:00	Wrap-up and Next Steps	A. Akramkhanov

Discussion and Action Points

1. *Introduction*
   1.1 Welcome and Round of Introductions
   1.2 Approval of the Agenda
   1.3 Introduction of the Project

Discussion:
Initial remarks by Dr. Sharma, Sr. Zebakh and Dr. Bouslikhane. After a round of introductions, Mr. Bonaiuti introduces the agenda detailing what the assembly agrees to discuss. Dr. Akramkhanov provides preliminary inputs to inform the Steering Committee (SC) before moving to the Agenda,

informing the participants that the project has a strong drive, attracts contributors and has the potential to leverage funds to address the needs of the project through tailored trainings and activities, as demonstrated by the voluntary participation of projects with good expertise on KM in the national workshop scheduled for the following two days. Afterwards, Dr. Akramkhanov proceeds with an overview of the project structure and status (https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/10433).

Dr. Zebakh addresses the matter of clearly identifying Steering Committee members, national committees' (NC) members and related responsibilities through a formal document. All participants agree as Mr. Bonaiuti explains that a Memorandum of Understanding and Terms of References for the SC and NC members can be produced in a timely fashion.

Dr. Boincean raises the point of ensuring that a project coordinator/leader should be oversee activities across all countries in order to ensure a shared approach. This is the role of Dr. Akramkhanov. Each country should then have a project focal point preferably appointed within existing institutions to secure long-term sustainability. National focal points are preferably appointed by the national partners rather than members of the SC. The National Focal point should facilitate a technical committee that supports the SC member from each country.

Dr. Alwang and the other participants requested to be informed better and more frequently of what is going on within the project, at least once a month, and also to receive action points. Mr. Bonaiuti replies that a project newsletter shall be put in place within the end of 2019.

Dr. Massler suggested that project activities should fill the gap between research institutions and farmers. Dr. Bouslikhane observes that extension services already play the important role of bridging the two. Mr. Bonaiuti and Dr. Akramkhanov clarify that end users are an indirect target of the project, while IFAD funds are specific for enhancing KM in the participating institutions. Dr. Massler also raises the point of linking the target countries more closely to IFAD projects, using a methodological and practical approach.

Dr. Zebakh raised the issue of including additional countries. The best cost-effective approach considering that the project has only $1.8 mln in 4 years in 3 countries is to link with ongoing IFAD projects in target countries. An example is the IFAD CLCA Project in Tunisia and Algeria. It is agreed that expanding should not come at a cost, unless the additional country presents an opportunity to boost the project implementation in Moldova, Morocco and Sudan. Mr. Bonaiuti proposes to submit this approach to IFAD to garner support from their side.

Action points:
- Project Team to share ToR for the SC and National Technical Committee (incl. expansion to other institutions) and MoU for SC member institutions.
- SC endorsed that Project can be managed by a Project Leader and three focal points.
- One appointed already in Moldova.
- One to be appointed in Morocco (IAV is preferred as non-SC Member).
- One to be appointed in Sudan.
- Project team to set up regular meetings and updates (e.g. newsletter, meetings)
- Project team to demonstrate linkages with IFAD projects. Three steps:
- Analysis of KM in those projects;

- Sharing POWB;
- Actively present our added value to secure some collaboration.
- SC endorsed that the Project should focus on three countries, however only involve some key stakeholders in sharing activities (e.g. symposia, newsletters). Sharing can be extended in the Near East with CIHEAM-MIP and Central Asia through ICARDA's regional office.

2. Country Yearly Reports on KM

Discussion:
Dr. Akramkhanov requested that the national delegates provide inputs and present their national cases. Dr. Zebakh provided an oral contribution. She reported that IAV Hassan II is in need of support to "manage" and "share" their knowledge and would like to employ a platform for sharing knowledge and capacities among IAV Hassan II staff. IAV Hassan II would also benefit from an institutional KM strategy and a training on KM relevance, with the objective to establish a KM system and documentation of processes in the institution.
Dr. Mekki stated that the project should focus more on the knowledge processes in agricultural research, also involving more research partners. Dr. Mekki presented Sudan's contribution (https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/10434).
Dr. Boincean stated that sharing knowledge to attract young researchers and students is a primary objective for Moldovan partners and introduced Moldova's activities (https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/10435).

Action points:
- Ensure that National Technical Committees are expanded with additional institutions and that each NC is facilitated by the national focal point;
- Project activities to be more strongly linked to partners' ongoing activities and linked with follow-up actions from partners (i.e. commitment). Example on Course on KM followed by Partners (i.e. IAV Hassan II) developing and adopting a KM Strategy.

3. Capacity Needs Assessment and Innovation Plans

Discussion:

Mr. Mueller presented the final Capacity Needs Assessment (https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/10436) currently with the editor for its final release and promotion on different media platforms. Mr. Graziano introduced the National Writeshops to develop capacity building and innovation plans (https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/10437), and presented on behalf of CIHEAM-Bari their contribution: (https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/10438) including the Innovation Plan draft. The CNA was well received by the SC and inputs for completing the Innovation Plan are provided. It is highlighted by the authors that the approach followed for both documents was participatory.

Action points:
- Update and share the Innovation Plan providing evident linkages with the CNA results.

4. The Annual Report and the Plan of Work and Budget

Discussion:
Dr. Akramkhanov introduced the Annual Report (covering June 2018 to June 2019) submitted as draft to IFAD (https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/10452). In addition, the Annual Workplan and Budget (AWPB) covering July 2019 to June 2020 was presented (https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/10453). Enrico Bonaiuti briefed about the difficulties encountered by having initiated the project in June instead of January, and suggested measures to match the project planning to the calendar year. Members mentioned that the first meeting was organized in October 2018 and therefore the initial months of the project were utilized as inception period. As also discussed during a recent face to face meeting with IFAD grant manager, Mr. Bonaiuti requested SC members to endorse a shift of planning to follow the calendar year, ensuring the SC members can endorse the plans before the proposal is submitted to IFAD. SC members agreed to consolidate AWPB and Annual Report for the period of June 2018 – December 2019 in order to start 2020 as full year corresponding to the 2nd year in the project proposal.

Dr. Akramkhanov presented the AWPB submitted to IFAD.
Dr. Alwang suggested to review the activity under Component 3 in AWPB 2020. He suggested adjusting Activity 3.3 from a branding perspective to hands-on packaging of knowledge products. ToR for the activity details to be shared for comments.
Dr. Massler raised the issue of the 5 vs 3 Learning Routes stated in the project proposal and budget. It was agreed that three Learning Routes would be enough to achieve target indicators in the Logical Framework. In addition, synergies with other learning routes from IFAD-Procasur in Sudan could be considered as synergies for the project. Procasur however would require ICARDA to take care of logistics since Procasur does not have offices in Moldova, Morocco nor Sudan. The budget should be revised, and a plan set with Procasur considering the logistical aspects.
Mr. Bonaiuti informed members that with the end of the second year approaching in 2020 the project will recruit an external consultant to manage the mid-term evaluation. A ToR for the evaluation will be developed that follows the IFAD guidelines for evaluation. This document will be shared with the SC for comments.
SC members discussed the acronym for the project and agreed to adopt "SKIM" to stand for shortened title of the project – Strengthening Institutional Knowledge Management.
Further discussions were held regarding areas of KM relevant to courses for the project activities: profiling users to assess incentives, ethics and intellectual property, and personal data management. Such areas may be included in Year 2 or Year 3 activities.

Action points:
- Review AWPB and Annual Report to match January–December calendar year;
- Review Activity 3.3 on Branding and focusing on training to package products. Share ToR for comments;
- SC endorsed to have only three Learning Routes. ICARDA and Procasur to finalize the planning;
- Share mid-term project evaluation ToR for comments;
- Accept project shortened title – Strengthening Institutional Knowledge Management with acronym to be SKIM;

- Project to consider aspects related to: profiling institutional stakeholders and assessing incentives related to adoption of KM best practices, ethics and intellectual property, personal data management.

5. *Wrap-up and Next Steps*

Discussion:
Dr. Akramkhanov thanked IAV Hassan II for hosting the event and for their great hospitality, and SC members for their active participation. He announced that the Communities of Practice meeting and Knowledge Symposium will take place the following days and there is a very proactive group of participants. Partners decided to hold the 2020 SC meeting in Moldova.

Action points:
- Finalize SC minutes and share with partners for comments.