

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

REPORT

**2020 SKiM Learning Week
Follow-up Course
Partners Online Training- Moldova
24-25 November 2020**



2020 SKiM Learning Week Follow-up Course

Partners Online Training- Moldova Report

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Prepared by

Centre International de Hautes Études Agronomiques Méditerranéennes of Bari (CIHEAM Bari)

Project

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

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About CIHEAM-Bari

CIHEAM Bari is a Centre for post-graduate training, applied scientific research and design of in loco partnership actions within the framework of international research and cooperation programmes.

The Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari and the Institute of Montpellier were the first to be established by CIHEAM.

In line with CIHEAM's Action Plan 2025 for the Mediterranean (CAPMED 2025), CIHEAM Bari is involved in a number of activities, which provide a platform for institutions and organizations wishing to cooperate across the Mediterranean area. Furthermore, the experience gained may often be transferred to other regions of the world. Special attention is paid to the involvement of CIHEAM Bari Alumni, especially in their countries of origin.

Cooperation and research actions concern important issues such as food security, poverty alleviation, capacity building at institutional level, more efficient use of natural resources, improvement of agricultural production and productivity, promotion of organic farming, development of sustainable food systems, resilience to climate change, integrated management of coastal areas, gender empowerment, fisheries and aquaculture, etc.

The networking activities conducted by CIHEAM Bari involve hundreds of institutions located in several countries, consolidating professional contacts, institutional and multi-stakeholder partnerships, country-to-country relationships and joint initiatives with the private sector. This paves the way to self-generating exchange of information, technical and professional expertise, publications, innovative research and educational activities, conferences and seminars, harmonization of methodological guidelines, etc.

Address

Via Ceglie 9 Valenzano 70010 Bari Italy. www.iamb.it.

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Table of Contents

Contents

1. Introduction.....	6
2. Objective	6
3. Participants	7
4. Methodology	7
5. Training overview.....	8
6. Conclusions	10
<u>Annex 1: Agenda.....</u>	<u>11</u>
Annex 2: List of Participants	14

Abbreviations

CIHEAM Bari	Centre International de Hautes Études Agronomiques Méditerranéennes – Bari
ESVC	Entrepreneurship Support Value Chain
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
KM	Knowledge Management
ISO	Innovation Support Organization
KM	Knowledge Management
SAUM	State Agrarian University Moldova
SKiM	Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises

1. Introduction

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

CIHEAM Bari has the task to organize a series of tailored capacity development interventions in the form of training courses based on the capacity need assessment undertaken in each country and that in the frame of the *Activity 2.1: Delivery of on-demand training courses in knowledge management and capacity development best practice*. Due to Covid 19 emergency, the first training (out of three) "Moldova training" was held virtually from 29 June to 3rd of July. As the capacity building is one of the pillars of the project and it is based on the partners' needs, we ascertained during these 4-days training that Moldova, Sudan and Morocco have different interests regarding follow up trainings. Sudan was interested in going deeper in ICT tools supporting distance learning, while participants from Moldova have reiterated their interest in entrepreneurship course.

2. Objective

During several events in the frame of SKiM project, Moldova State Agrarian University (SAUM) has shown an interest in capacity building activities related to entrepreneurship. It is a transversal discipline in all the faculties. For that reason this follow up was tailored on demand as the partner has requested it at the end of 2020 learning week. It aims to transmit innovative ideas to develop businesses that help graduated students to take initiatives and become integrated into society by becoming participatory in the economy ([Annex 1](#)). It meets the project **thematic area 'financial inclusion of rural women and youth'** through sharing the knowledge regarding the entrepreneurial culture and its challenges.

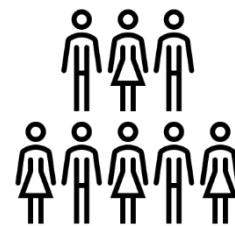
Actually a smart café project is incubating at the University that will be a ring in the chain of knowledge management as it is a tool for sharing knowledge where People can have good discussion, dialogue and externalization of innovative ideas. The proposed training course aims at providing key knowledge to those who are running entrepreneurship support programs or are set to create one, to tailor the programs according to the ecosystems where they operate and to the typical users they are trying to support. At the end of the course they will possess the tools that could be used for the self assessment of the entrepreneurial idea besides becoming familiar with the different service that should accompany each phase of the idea development.

Training a limited number of participants is only the jumping off point and the trained persons at their turn will share their knowledge with others. Moreover, the SKiM learning week multimedia material was organized and set up as online open access course that will give the opportunity to a larger number of persons to access to knowledge (<https://mip.iamb.it/index.php/training>).

3. Participants

The participants were chosen by the partner institution SAUM. The targeted audience were from 3 faculties:

- Agronomy Faculty. (Fields of study: agronomy, biological and life sciences, botany, crop production, ecology, soil science).
- Cadastre and Law Faculty. (Fields of study: environmental engineering, law, physics, private law, public law, real estate, rural planning, surveying and mapping)
- Economics Faculty. (Fields of study: banking, economics, finance, international economics, management, marketing, modern languages, social sciences, tourism)



Participants were fluent in English. The 2-days training had an average of 20 participants/day with a total of 28 registered participants to whom certificates of attendance were delivered upon request ([Annex 2](#)). The women's participation was strongly noted (23 vs 5) as well as Master students 9 out of 28.

4. Methodology

The course was a mix of presentations, individual and group work that was based on the Entrepreneurship Support Value Chain Methodology (ESVC) which takes into consideration the 4 elements of a support program.

Relevant participants were provided with access to the ESVC Self-Assessment Program and were asked to fill it to the best of their knowledge. Instructions on how to use the program were provided in due time and email support was activated to ensure usability.

The lecturer used the zoom poll tool to interact with the participants using single and multiple choices questions. He also divided several times the participants in separate rooms with exercises to be shared within 15 minutes such as definition of entrepreneurship, creating an innovative idea on chosen topic, etc.

On the first day, the topics were affronted from the entrepreneur's perspective while on the second day from the point of view of the Innovation Support Organization (ISO).

The follow-up implementation steps:

- ✓ Verify and confirm the demand
- Develop content
- Identify and prepare audience (briefing)
- Deliver training
- Deliver report and training material

5. Training overview

The training was run on 24 and 25 November for 4 hours per day. However, a briefing was organized 2 weeks before the scheduled training in which have participated the organizers (CIHEAM Bari- Dr Jocelyne Jawhar) and the lecturer (Giordano Dichter H&D Partners SPRL) and SAUM (Dr Elena Scripnic and Dr Svetlana Petrascu) in order to better target and steer the participants objectives.

Day 1

On the first day, the lecturer conferred about the entrepreneurship journey, the ecosystems and the services. He spoke about difficulties in setting up the entrepreneurship programme. He switches to the 4 phases of an entrepreneurship journey that he illustrated with a graph and that represents the life of a typical small business: prestart phase, launch phase, grow phase and scale phase). The 4 phases have different sets of services to be deployed that should be defined once the entrepreneurship support value chain is set up in order to check in which phase the entrepreneur fall and how to intervene.

In the prestart phase: the startup is not yet launched but the validation is ongoing. In this phase, the revenue is negative which is normal in the first 2-3 years of a start-up then it reaches break-even points then it starts to scale. Entrepreneurs need support mainly in the prestart phase or else they don't reach the launch phase, and in the Valley of death (between launch and grow phases), where lots of ideas fail down. The other risk factor is between grow and scale phases, once the company is grown and has employees but does not invest anymore in innovation and in ensuring new products and services. The lecturer went through the different reasons for a start-up failure that vary from a phase to another one; In the prestart phase, the failure is in finding a product market fit or in building a mvp (minimum viable product), in communication strategy. In the launch phase the failure of endeavor is due to a non-conviction of the product in the market, or the product is not profitable while in the growth and scale phases the problems could be the customer acquisition and other financial complications. Then he spoke about the Entrepreneurship Support Value Chain (ESVC) with its different phases and the needed services along the way: outreach, prestart, launch, growth. Outreach is about creating the mindset, the prestart is all about proof, the launch is supporting the startups that actually started and the growth is for those startups that have the capacity to grow. Then he passed to the chapter ecosystem that is a crucial point to a sound programme. Ecosystems are made of institutions mainly the persons inside that provide services directly to SMEs or can be leveraged to support SMEs. When ecosystems work properly they ask like risk mitigators. The players in the ecosystem: government, education, support org, money corporates with specific missions. Government through policy initiatives, incentives, programme funding while the support organizations through facilities and equipment that might benefit startups.

Day 2

The lecturer started with a wrap-up of the first day where he stated the different phases of the ESVC; he shared from his website www.hndpartners.eu/toolset, where are listed both the tools to be used in order to put it in place the whole value chain: the self assessment tool and the canvases tool. Going through the website, each phase of the ESVC has a series of questions to be answered and that will consist a platform to support a potential entrepreneur to start reasoning about the actual state of play. Going through the steps, at the end the entrepreneur will get a chart with the different services related to each of the 4 phases.

The outreach phase is vital to stimulate people to become entrepreneurs in order to reach the benchmark.

The main activities consist in organizing workshops, hackatons, special days to get people acquainted.

He conveyed about the importance of the ecosystem players and how the ISO's success relies on them, how much the connections with universities are important. He stated the example of successfully organizing a hackaton putting together players such as associations, entrepreneurs and SMEs.

Main Q&A

The training was animated with questions and answers where the participants were very interactive. Hereby are reported some of the questions.

Q: what is the difference between incubator and accelerator?

A: Incubator usually has physical space and puts together the components to help entrepreneurs. An accelerator offers money to start-up for exchange of equity like for 4-5 years. The incubator works around the needs of a company/entrepreneur while the accelerator around the investor's needs. Besides the accelerators are more web-based. Incubators are 90% governmental investment (universities, state bank) while accelerators are private funded (entrepreneurs and investors). Example of accelerator is Silicon valley.

Q: what is a unicorn?

A: it is a one billion dollar estimated start-up like for example facebook, skype.

Q: Which of the phases is the most important?

A: the proof of business as if we should be certain of the idea's impact in the market

6. Conclusions

The participants have showed high interest and they were very interactive as the training was tailored upon their request.

The positive point was that it targeted one partner (SAUM) in one country (Moldova) so they had common Interests during the training as well as they communicated freely in their own language in the frame of working group activities .

The satisfaction was in the participation of Master students that were interested in the entrepreneurship culture that could open the job opportunities and encourage them to take their future in hands. They were initiated to think how to develop businesses allowing them to become integrated into society.

Besides the SAUM has asked the support in order to realize their project "smart café" as well as requested other trainings.

No better words than this email sent by Elena Scripnic at the end of the training:

"I would like to express our gratitude for your willingness of collaboration. This collaboration is very important for our university. All the activities realized within the KM project have a great impact on internationalization of our university. The training held this week was of great interest. We hope you are determined to realize other training with our staff and students. Special thanks to Professor Giordano for his dedication and a comprehensive approach of discussed issues. These are unique opportunities of our students and staff to have the meeting with the international professionals. We are also thankful to Dr Jocelyne for the support and organizing the activity. We rely on your support and future cooperation."



ANNEX 1. AGENDA

2020 SKiM Learning Week – Follow-up online training course

Title: Facilitating the entrepreneurs' journey

Organized by: CIHEAM Bari

Trainer: Giordano Dichter (H&D Partners SPRL Brussels-based consulting firm)*

Moderator: Jocelyne jawhar

Date: 24 & 25 November 2020

Time: 13:00-17:00

Target country: Moldova

Presentation

The economic growth of a region depends in no small part on the ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship. That ecosystem must nourish the local entrepreneurial community and the innovators that will enable growth to happen, but every region, every local territory, every actual environment has its own particular features. Entrepreneurship responds to the conditions where it is embedded, and these vary greatly from place to place and over time. Getting it right is not easy, and managing the process whereby local stakeholders agree on a common vision is also complex. Moreover entrepreneurial services should be built around the real needs of entrepreneurs, and the set up of an entrepreneurship support program needs to take into account the characteristics of the entrepreneurs and the challenges they meet in the various phases of their entrepreneurship journey.

The proposed training course aims at providing key knowledge to those who are running entrepreneurship support programs or are set to create one, to tailor the programs according to the ecosystems where they operate and to the typical users they are trying to support.

Methodology

The course will be a mix of presentations, individual and group work that will be based on the Entrepreneurship Support Value Chain Methodology (ESVC) which takes into consideration the 4 elements of a support program:

- **Preparation:** relevant participants will be provided with access to the ESVC Self-Assessment Program and will be asked to fill it to the best of their knowledge. Instructions on how to use the program will be provided in due time and email support will be activated to ensure usability. Responses will be then analysis and serve for the basis for the lessons and discussion of modules #2.

- Outreach: responding to the question “how can we best stimulate local potential entrepreneurs to engage in the entrepreneurship journey?”
- Pre-start: responding to the questions “how do we select the most promising idea and how do we get them ready to launch?”
- Launch: responding to the question “how do we set up a set of services to ensure the entrepreneurs’ survival in the first years of operation?”
- Growth: responding to the question “How do we secure organic growth and scaleup of the supported startups?”

Specific tools developed by H&D Partners will be used to ensure interactivity, engagement and the relevance to the participants involved. The tools are:

1. The **ESVC self-evaluation program** which allows an organization to:

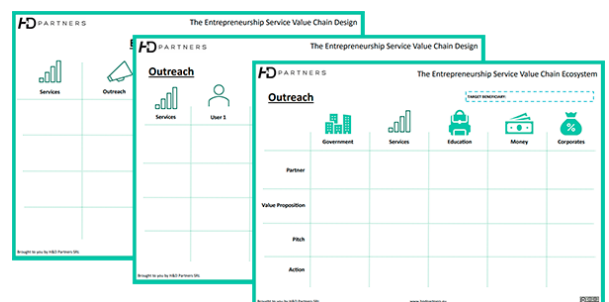


- ➔ Assess the phases of its entrepreneurship support program, from outreach to pre-start, from launch to growth.
- ➔ Prioritize objectives by understanding short-comings and potential.
- ➔ Decide on actions and track progress.
- ➔ Self-assess the organization maturity itself as part of

the ESVC self-evaluation

- ➔ Self-assess the services deployed
- ➔ The tools can provide an aggregate comparison of the self-assessment results done by the members of the board of directors and the management team.

2. The **ESVC Canvases** which are meant to help the understanding and the design of entrepreneurship support program and services by taking into account the local ecosystem. They allow participants to follow the ESVC methodology which ultimately will help the business support organization to engineer the support services that the entrepreneurs need to validate, launch and grow their businesses.



Program

- **Preparation:** relevant participants will be provided with access to the ESVC Self-Assessment Program and will be asked to fill it to the best of their knowledge. Instructions on how to use the program will be provided in due time and email support will be activated to ensure usability. Responses will be then analysis and serve for the basis for the lessons and discussion of modules #2.
- **Module 1: The entrepreneurs’ Journey (4 hours)**
 - o Setting the scene: the study case
 - o The stages of company growth from idea to scaleup.
 - o The entrepreneurs’ challenges: why do entrepreneurs fail?
 - o Following growth from idea to growth of a typical entrepreneur

Participants will be led through the typical entrepreneurial journey through presentations and of practical exercises, where they will be asked to brainstorm and discuss about a specific case-study.

- **Module 2: The entrepreneur support program (4 hours)**

- Definition of the typical user
- Review of the entrepreneurial challenges
- Design of the outreach and pre-start elements of the ESVC
- Design of the Launch and Growth elements of the ESVC
- Translating all into concrete services

The ESVC Service Development Canvases will be used to guide the participants through the identification and development of the entrepreneurship support services.

Trainer

Giordano Dichter

Giordano Dichter (Italian, US citizen) is founder of the H&D Partners SPRL Brussels-based consulting firm through which he continuously delivers support to a wide multitude of actors in private sector development. He has developed the ESVC methodology and toolset (www.hndpartners.eu/methdology). He is specialized in supporting actors worldwide in creating and delivering entrepreneurship support services to startups and SMEs. He has provided peer-reviews, assessments and technical assistance to dozens of incubators and business support providers worldwide (e.g. all over Europe, Taiwan, China, Indonesia, Russia, Armenia, Brazil, Canada, Tunisia, Morocco, Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Senegal, South Africa) for major clients such as Ciheam – IAMB, GIZ, UNDP, UNOPS, ILO, GOPA, EBN and more. He provides workshops on entrepreneurial ecosystem development, on business models for sustainable incubators and accelerators, and on entrepreneurship service design and ecosystem building.

From 2009 to 2018 Giordano headed the EU|BIC Services team at the European Business and Innovation Center Network where he designed and managed the EUBIC trademark and assessed a multitude of innovation and entrepreneurship center, ensuring the alignment with the EU|BIC Criteria. He was responsible for the EBN training program and publications which he produced as a service for the EBN members and at the request of third organizations (such as the European Court of Auditors and the European Commission). At EBN he was also responsible for the management of private-sector development related technical assistance projects where he delivered expertise and coordinated experts for achieving strategic goals.

Previously he has worked for the United Nations (UNOPS and ILO) where he supported local economic development actions mainly in the Balkans and he has worked for the Regional Business and Innovation Centre of the Lazio Region in Italy.

Annex 2: List of Participants from SAUM

Name	Contacts
STAFF	
Elena Scripnic	e.scripnic@uasm.md
Svetlana Petrascu	s.sasu@uasm.md
Irina Blindu	i.blindu@uasm.md
Elena Simciuc	simciuc.elena@gmail.com
Caisin Larisa	caisinlarisa@mail.ru
Cojocaru Olesea	olesea.cojocaru@bk.ru
Horjan Oleg	ohorjan407@gmail.com
Sîrbu Rodica	sirburada@gmail.com
Muntean Rita	munteanurita1@gmail.com
Muntean Iulian	iulianase128@gmail.com
Litvin Aurelia	aurelia.litvin@gmail.com
Zbancă Andrei	andzbanca@yahoo.com
Mocanu Natalia	mocanunatalia@gmail.com
Beda Oxana	oksana.beda.78@mail.ru
Baltag Grigore	g.baltag@uasm.md
Angela Chişlaru	achislaru73@gmail.com
Rodica Burbulea	burbulea2000@mail.ru
Svetlana Gangan	svetlanagangan@mail.ru
Bujor Tatiana	bujortania@yahoo.com
Master students	
Creţu Doina	doinacretu126@gmail.com
Gobjilă Elena	gobjila.elena.05@gmail.com
Cebotari Denis	cebotari.denis97@gmail.com,
Cheibaş Mihai	misacheibas50@gmail.com,
Noroc Irina	irina.noroc3@gmail.com
Scurtu Natalia	nataliascurtu98@gmail.com
Manole Olesea	olesea.manole@gmail.com
Popescu Mihaela	popescumichellee@gmail.com
Molodan-Glevciuc Tatiana	tanica27b@gmail.com
CIHEAM Bari	
Jocelyne Jawhar	jawhar@iamb.it
Giordano Dichter	giordano@hndpartners.eu

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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.

