

SKiM

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



Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

*15-16 December, 2021
CIHEAM-Bari, Valenzano (Italy)*

<https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766.1/74008a>

Introduction

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 collaborates 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, providing practical examples of KM best practices for analysis and adoption by participating institutions. Increasing the capacities of participating public institutions, by providing necessary structures and systems at the country and regional levels, ensures 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 outlines the project team, partners and stakeholders. 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.

The SKiM Knowledge Management Portal (<https://knowledgemanagementportal.org>) is the open access page showcasing the latest info and achievements of SKiM institutions, organizations and networks partnering in Knowledge Management worldwide.

Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The committee shall bring together the multi-stakeholder platform to examine KM practices adopted in the year of implementation, in addition to derivate initiatives that address natural resource management, sustainable land management, conservation agriculture, livestock data, agricultural development solutions, and climate resilience issues, with the final objective of planning for future activities while incentivizing knowledge and competences exchange among them with communal institutional growth and partnership building.

The outcomes of the meeting are planned to be achieved through:

- A) Presentations by the stakeholders of the yearly initiatives on KM, activities, policies and practices.
- B) Presentation of the annual progress 2021 and proposed activities for 2022.
- C) Discussion, agreement and finalization of the Plan of Work and Budget.

Participants and beneficiaries

The committee includes members from the implementation partners, the funder and delegates from the participating countries, with the responsibility to communicate the state of development and progression toward the pre-assessed knowledge management needs and the newly identified improvable areas. The participants bring to the table a great variety of disciplines interfacing with the natural resource management, including social science, economics, information technology, engineering and more.

Wednesday, 15th of December 2021

TIME (CET)	AGENDA	FACILITATOR(S)
9.30 – 9.45	Welcome - Round of introductions - Approval of agenda	Maurizio Raeli CIHEAM Bari Director Damiano Petruzzella Akmal Akramkhanov
9.45 – 13.00	Status of project implementation -Mid-term evaluation (30') - Actions and updates of M&E plan (10') Q&A (10') Country presentations - Moldova Developments and Discussion (15') - Morocco Developments and Discussion (15') - Sudan Developments and Discussion (15') Q&A (15') - SKiM Portal, Communication and Platform Integrations (15') - CIHEAM Bari (15') - Virginia Tech (15') Q&A (20') - 2021 SKiM progress summary and discussion (20')	Ross McLeod (recorded) Innocent Bikara (online) Mihaela Cojocaru (online) Sanaa Zebakh (online) Sarrah Rasheid Svetlana Saakova (online) Valerio Graziano Jocelyne Jawhar Jeffrey Alwang (online) A. Akramkhanov
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch time (CIHEAM cafeteria) + PCR Test for Participants in Need	
14.00 – 15.00	- Evidence synthesis paper (10') - Scaling readiness of innovations and discussion (20') Q&A (10') AWPB 2022 - Summary of workplan for 2022 (20')	Murat Sartas (online) A. Akramkhanov
15.00 – 16.00	Discussion and next steps	A. Akramkhanov

Thursday, 16th of December 2021

TIME (CET)	AGENDA	FACILITATOR(S)
9.30 – 12.00	Visit to Technology Transfer Office & Innovation Lab	D. Petruzzella J. Jawhar

Steering Committee Minutes

List of participants

#	Name	Position	Institution	Country
1	Mihail Rurac	Associate professor at the Agronomy and Environment Department	State Agrarian University of Moldova	Moldova
2	Otman Sebbata (online)	Chef de Division de l'Information et de la Communication	INRA	Morocco
3	Mahmoud Awad Mekki Ahmed	Associate Professor	Agricultural Research Corporation - Sudan	Sudan
4	Mihaela Cojocaru (online)	SKiM focal point	CPIU-IFAD	Moldova
5	Andrei Zbanca	Associate Professor in Business and Administration Department	State Agrarian University	Moldova
6	Sanaa Zebakh (online)	SKiM focal point	IAV Hassan II	Morocco
7	Aziz Abouabdillah (online)	Professor at the National School of Agriculture of Meknes	ENA-Meknes	Morocco
8	Sarra Rasheid Abdelwahab	SKiM focal point	Ahfad University for Women	Sudan
9	Biagio Di Terlizzi	CIHEAM Bari Deputy Director	CIHEAM Bari	Italy
10	Jocelyne Jawhar	SKiM coordinator at CIHEAM Bari	CIHEAM Bari	Italy
11	Damiano Petruzzella	Scientific administrator, Head of Innovation & Youth Knowledge Unit	CIHEAM Bari	Italy
12	Jeffrey Alwang (online)	Professor at the Department of Agricultural Economics	Virginia Tech	USA
13	Isabelle Stordeur	Regional analyst in Near east, North Africa and Europe Division	IFAD	Italy
14	Gabriele Marchese	Regional planning and operations analyst	IFAD	Italy
15	Viviana Sacco (online)	Programme coordinator	Procasur	Italy
16	Enrico Bonaiuti	Research Team Leader - MEL	ICARDA	Italy
17	Murat Sartas (online)	Multi-stakeholder network scientist	ICARDA	Turkey
18	Innocent Bikara (online)	MEL specialist	ICARDA	Uganda
19	Svetlana Saakova (online)	SKiM research fellow	ICARDA	Uzbekistan
20	Valerio Graziano	Knowledge management officer	ICARDA	Italy
21	Victoria Clarke	Knowledge management research fellow	ICARDA	Italy
22	Akmal Akramkhanov	SKiM project lead	ICARDA	Uzbekistan

Announcements

- All members of the Steering Committee and related associates are present.
- All participants agree on being recorded for minutes keeping purposes.

Agenda, Discussions and Action Points

1. Introduction

1.1 Welcoming and round of introductions

1.2 Approval of the Agenda

Instructional video on CIHEAM-Bari: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/11482>

CIHEAM-Bari Head of Innovation & Youth Knowledge Unit:
<https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/66189>

Discussion: Initial remarks by Akmal Akramkhanov, thanking the audience and requesting a quick round of introductions. The floor is then given to the CIHEAM-Bari Deputy Director presenting himself and the institution he represents which is remarked as constantly evolving in collaboration with Mediterranean Countries and Governments. CBDD thanks all SKiM partners for closely bridging with CIHEAM-Bari in a framework of development, especially important for the work on Technology Transfer Offices to provide substantial practical support to target countries and institutions and envision collaborations with the private sector. CBDD shares their targets in scope and context and envisions activities notably in Sudan in water management in coastal areas.

2. SKiM Implementing Partners and Stakeholders: Presentations and Q&A

Moldova NFP: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/66864>

Morocco NFP: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/66865>

Sudan NFP: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/66866>

Discussion: The facilitator of the SC Meeting emphasized the *dynamism* of the interactions thanks to the *face-to-face opportunity* to close the 2021 year and start 2022.

Presentation by the national partners represented by the respective National Focal Points are given. The stakeholders express utmost appreciation for the mutual collaboration between SKiM partners, especially for the trainings and support received, with a special mention for the Training course in Bari campus in September and Moldova Learning Route experience in October. The national stakeholders are pleased to show the developments in KM activities and assets carried out in 2021 and presented lists of potential activities to undertake in 2022, both with SKiM support and autonomously, having internalized the best practices transferred via trainings and having initiated autonomous mechanisms of institutional growth in KM.

SKiM national focal points stress the emphasis for digitalization (e.g., virtual events) and their effort to adapt their knowledge management and knowledge sharing to new norms (e.g., COVID-19). Thus, how national partners have made efforts to adapt to local knowledge sharing or developments on the ground through increased collaborations with extension services, empowerment of youth and women through knowledge, translations of products, improved online platforms and trainings. National partners also share their effort, with the knowledge they have gained from the project to up-level their action into more strategic approaches with the development of a KM strategy providing recommendations for KM systems and activities on aligning KM tools.

SKiM partners express the need to continue national consultations through National Technical Committees to deliberate on the 2022 activities they would like to invest in and carry out in the framework of SKiM.

The IFAD Regional Analyst inquiries about SKiM in-country effectiveness with the NFPs, in particular about a) if there was any best practice identified describing improved institutional processes and exchange in the Moldova Learning Route, b) the benefits of SKiM engagement towards the development of the Morocco KM Strategy and c) the positive impact of SKiM on Sudan KM networks at national level. The NFPs reply respectively that the a) Moldova Learning Route focused on best practices that fall within 3 thematic areas of the project and applied on the ground by various end users, mainly smallholders, these best practices originate from participating stakeholders including CPIU-IFAD, SAUM, Selectia and IDIS, b) the initiative to develop Morocco KM Strategy enabled constructive exchange among key stakeholders in agriculture sector thanks to SKiM engagement and through capacity development of the national institutions and overall guidance and facilitation in establishing direct linkages with relevant ministries and partners, c) the Sudanese partners have developed a habit of deploying tools acquired through SKiM (technical committees, communities of practice, consultations groups, KM vocabulary and concepts) for institutional growth.

The IFAD Grant Manager inquires whether and how is planned for in-country IFAD active projects to link with the national KM Strategies and initiatives on KM carried out within SKiM. It is observed that linkages with other IFAD initiatives need more attention and efforts by SKiM.

The SKiM Project Lead states that planning for strengthening linkages with the IFAD in-countries initiatives and through the partners with the same initiatives is underway, with additional efforts in 2022 after the analysis conducted on these linkages in the previous years. Additionally, it is expressed commitment towards making more in-countries KM realities and activities known nationally and SSTC.

The Q&A session revolves on the matter of sustainability of 2022 activities, in the perspective of the project closure, in particular the national consultations through NTCs and the partners' commitment to KM developments, the Knowledge Management Portal and the investing in ICTs in general. ICARDA Research Team Leader suggests particular attention to sustainability plans are given in 2022 to SKiM initiatives and the elaboration of an exit strategy.

Action points:

- National stakeholders to consult through NTCs in order to deliberate on 2022 national initiatives within SKiM, in addition to the planned project activities and commitments.
- SKiM PMU to support the national stakeholders in their NTCs consultations for planning of 2022 activities, with particular focus on sustainability and national assets innervation.

3. SKiM Project Management Unit and Evaluator: Presentations and Q&A

Mid-Term Evaluator: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/66158>

SKiM MEL Specialist: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/66862>

SKiM KMO & Research Fellow: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/66863>

Discussion: Recorded video presentation of the Mid-Term Evaluation is provided to the audience, followed by the SKiM MEL Specialist presentation of the Post-MTE Action Plan developed to meet the recommendations of the Evaluator.

The Q&A session starts off a consideration from SKiM Coordinator at CIHEAM Bari, on whether it will be possible in the remaining project duration to spend all project funds, to which SKiM Project Lead replies that an extension request is planned to submit to IFAD.

INRA Head of Information, agrees on the proposal of project extension and underlines the importance of the MTE recommendation on input more focus and resources in-countries for national developments.

ARC-Sudan Associate Professor also agrees with the extension and also requests that detailed financial information by project component should be provided to NTCs in order to best deliberate on 2022 national partners commitments.

Based on an MTE recommendation, the SKiM MEL Specialist suggests that the youth monitoring should be based on the age range standard of the country target of intervention, to which the Steering Committee agrees.

ICARDA Research Team Leader states that making short concept notes by country could be considered for 2022 for it would cover a wide range of strategic objectives, such as a) assessing feasible KM indicators by country, b) suggest on implementation best strategies and channels for future deployments, c) bring value to the national stakeholders and end users, d) nurture national networks. SC members agree on taking in consideration this point.

The Sudan NFP requests that a capacity development activity is centered on the SKiM Knowledge Management Portal and related technologies for future utilization from Sudanese partners. The ICARDA Research Team Leader suggests more focus is brought on the analysis of the KP analytics, and that a guiding document on the deployment and adoption of KM platforms is produced out of the SKiM KP and MEL platform for INRA Morocco developments.

Action points:

- SKiM PMU to finalize extension request submission, together with the Post-MTE Action Plan resolutions in action, indicators adjustments, the 2022 complete AWPB.
- SKiM PMU to initiate the concept note of the project exit strategy and related products, such as sustainability plans for the SKiM KP.

4. KiM Implementing Partners: Presentations and Q&A

Discussion: Jocelyne Jawhar from CIHEAM Bari shared activities throughout the project and highlighted the trainings already conducted or planned in Morocco, Sudan and Moldova. CIHEAM Bari emphasizes that trainings are based on the needs of participants and partners and follow the common thread of interlinked KM topics. CIHEAM Bari also states that trainings are recorded to increase accessibility of knowledge online due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to permit a broader audience to adopt the trainings. Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) were one of the main themes and tools of trainings originally planned in Sudan, however, due to instability in the country the training course was organized at CIHEAM campus in Bari. CIHEAM Bari have laid good ground to build next training course on KM facilitation through TTO pillars and domains planned to be held in Moldova in 2022. Jocelyne Jawhar emphasizes the importance of valorizing and transferring knowledge from researchers to private sector to make the knowledge concrete and adopted. Presentation also shared the very satisfactory feedbacks received from participants about the training content including involvement of international experts, Morocco's intention to uptake a TTO based approach and positive interest of all participants about the importance of provided material and sharing all absorbed KM tools back in their relevant institutional settings. CIHEAM Bari also shared the use of interactive sessions including practical participation where participants take on specific roles within TTOs through simulations. As a next step, CIHEAM Bari emphasized the importance to capture knowledge needs in 2022 to be able to provide capacity building fit for partners. Therefore, stakeholders are expected to consult each other within their regular meetings in focus countries in order to agree on next training course topics for CIHEAM Bari to start preparations.

Professor Jeffrey Alwang from Virginia Tech (USA), SKiM co-implementing partner, presented the results of a study in Sudan estimating the value of knowledge in institutional management to understand how decision makers are using knowledge for agricultural research priority setting (ARPS). Professor shares methodology and data collection instruments and how conclusions were based on the expected return of knowledge sharing and allocation. Jeffrey Alwang shares the issues to address, notably:

- (A) Research is not aware of the how to due to bottlenecks of better management in agricultural development
- (B) Too many alternatives that induces procrastination

The professor suggests a solution to measure how easy access to knowledge helps decision making. Jeffrey Alwang shared conclusion to attribute economic value to knowledge management and knowledge sharing and see how research resources spent to produce knowledge by ARC Sudan benefits Sudanese farmers and present findings to policy makers to raise awareness. The professor concludes by sharing that it is important to create adoption profiles to be able to make correct decision and implement adaptive management accordingly on the use of KM tools for example. In addition, that the adoption profiles can help inform where to invest, either in breeding or in innovation platforms and that these are trade-offs worth discussing on an individual, institutional, and country basis.

Research Team Leader MEL-ICARDA suggests consultation for this work in the plan for 2022 and shows interest in Sudan case study to expand how at program and center level in CGIAR the study could be adopted emphasizing on how what has been produced within SKiM or for SKiM project can be reused or adopted elsewhere.

Sudan focal point comments on research activities and agrees that the study needs to be shared to reshape research in the coming years to be able to reach farmers and to avoid technologies that do not produce impact or generate adoption. Jeffrey Alwang responds that institutions need to have a catalogue of technologies that are not creating impact or generating adoption, i.e what does not work; to understand why this is the case and make decisions accordingly.

Action points:

- Country stakeholders with support of focal points to summarize capacity building needs along presented TTO approach and pillars for next training course
- CIHEAM Bari to develop and implement training course in Moldova addressing content is according to participants and partner knowledge needs.
- Research Team Leader MEL-ICARDA to share case study from Sudan with CGIAR for uptake and adoption

5. Scaling Readiness: Presentation and Q&A

SKiM Scientist: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/66877>

Discussion: Scaling Readiness consultations in-countries have reportedly catalyzed the interest of the national stakeholders, in addition to IFAD and FAO, while also linking them to the research efforts done within SKiM on the knowledge evaluation synthesis deliverable. The resulting network has made possible the realization of the Scaling Readiness of Conservation Agriculture in Moldova, while the reports on Sudan and Morocco are underway. Additionally, in Morocco, special interest around communities of practices management has arisen requesting SKiM expertise in mentoring on the subject. The SKiM Scientist suggests that suitable attention is provided to the grassroots national initiatives on KM and that trainings by demand-driven actors are accounted for in SKiM 2022 activities to enable stronger national capacity on KM.

SAUM Associate Professor in Agronomy states that national partners from Moldova also need extensive trainings on CoP management, as such social managerial infrastructure is still missing and not well represented by national offices or organizations active on the ground.

Clarification is requested on the theme for the Morocco Scaling Readiness assessment report, which was then extensively discussed to focus on Conservation Agriculture considering November 2021 news that the Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture, Marine Fisheries, Rural Development, and Water and Forests announced that up to one million hectares of cereals will be cultivated under Conservation Agriculture by 2030.

CIHEAM-Bari Youth & Innovation Unit Head expresses the availability of CIHEAM-Bari in supporting with expertise the co-design and co-creation of laboratories and ecosystems where it is possible for KM practitioners to interact and be backstopped in their efforts for innovate their national KM ecosystems. On this account, SKiM Project Lead highlights the importance of accounting for national contexts to best design localized interventions, and in this perspective the courses on demand represent a feasible way forward.

Sudan NFP underlines that while Sudan benefits greatly from IFAD, and CGIAR, interventions, there are barriers and constraints to the implementations' effectiveness, such as language, practices and local dynamics. Further cooperation is needed in order to enhance the responsiveness to development efforts in the country.

IFAD Regional Analyst expresses appreciation towards achievements in Sudan and propositions for the future strengthening of networks in Sudan and across SKiM target countries, nationally and through SSTC. It is stated that, while regional investments through loans are ongoing, IFAD right now establishes grants with the exact objective of implementing activities at regional level that have potential to support national networks.

Action points:

- SKiM PMU to actionize strategic in-country interventions to support national networks on KM and meet relevant KM capacity development demands deemed with high responsiveness potential.

6. Annual Report 2021 and AWPB 2022: Presentation and Q&A

SKiM Project Lead: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11766/66842>

Discussion: The IFAD Regional Analyst clarifies that the extension can be requested for up to 12 months and that the request submitted no later than 30 March 2022 accompanied by AWPB up to requested completion date, budget reallocation request if required.

The IFAD Grant Manager states that time and resources should be allocated for the exit strategy with a clear focus on sustainability, approach to CoPs after the project end and national commitments.

The discussion moves on possible notable activities of 2022. The SAUM Associate Professor in Business calls for case studies and guidance in organizing farmers in CoPs, and also digitalization guidelines for smart agriculture, maybe channeled through the cooperatives that help farmers in Moldova, which right now act as a form of extension service but without proper training.

SKiM Project Lead underlines the SSTC potential of IRRI-Smart innovation developed by Moroccan partner ENA-Meknes in scaling and applying through Moldova and Sudan.

The Morocco NFP confirms the will of Moroccan partners to carry out a second workshop on KM Strategy design autonomously, while returning to SKiM for guidance whenever needed. It is requested of the project the continuation of the training with CIHEAM-Bari on Technology Transfer Offices.

SKiM Coordinator at CIHEAM-Bari suggests to decide whether to focus on one pillar for TTO implementation or to extensively plan for a full-on course on TTO. A deadline for the national consultations should also be established, with clear indications on the next activities.

Sudan and Moldova NFP agree on the deadline and objectives of the national consultations.

Action points:

- SKiM PMU to assess feasibility of 2022 partners requests that the project can support, including development of sustainability plan and project exit strategy.

7. Next Steps

Summary of the Action Points:

- National stakeholders to consult through NTCs in order to deliberate on 2022 national initiatives within SKiM, in addition to the planned project activities and commitments.
- SKiM PMU to support the national stakeholders in their NTCs consultations for planning of 2022 activities, with particular focus on sustainability.
- SKiM PMU to finalize:
 - ✓ project no-cost extension request submission
 - ✓ annual progress report including financial report
 - ✓ AWPB for the remaining project time
 - ✓ post-MTE action plan resolutions in action, indicators adjustments
 - ✓ include concept note of the project exit strategy in 2022 activities