Exit Strategy

for Sustainability of Knowledge Management Strengthening Interventions

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

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project Background

The SKiM Project: Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia, and Europe (NEN Region) is a multilateral project working to address five themes including knowledge management (KM), south-south cooperation (SSTC), training, women, and youth. This project aims to (1) assess capacity and enhance knowledge management skills of key rural institutions and other stakeholders in Moldova, Morocco, Sudan, and (2) foster and promote knowledge exchange across in-country, cross-country and trans-regional partners to foster knowledge uptake, transfer, and management. These objectives contribute to the goal of developing effective and long-term knowledge management in the partner countries.

The project commenced in June 2018 and is scheduled to end at the end of 2022. The project consists of three components: (1) KM capacity assessment for enhanced formulation of learning needs; (2) Capacity development and knowledge systematization; and (3) Enhanced regional knowledge exchange. Component 1, (26 per cent of the project cost) includes activities such as assessment of the current state of knowledge management and sharing in target organizations, formulation of an approach paper on KM and communication strategy, formulation of capacity development and innovation plans for the target countries and conducting a regional workshop to kick-start implementation plans and Communities of Practice (CoP). Component 2 (37 per cent of the project cost) series of tailored capacity development interventions in the form of training courses based on the capacity needs assessments undertaken in each country. Courses are delivered face-to-face and online (Moodle). Component 3 (37 per cent of the project cost) was included to ensure that an information-sharing mechanism (e.g., joint online portal) is available and sustainable. The envisioned project outcomes include improved understanding of KM capacities of the key rural institutions in target countries, effective learning systems established and embedded across organizational processes with strengthened human and institutional capacities to manage the systematization of good practices, and improved knowledge exchanges among stakeholders based on increased adoption of good practices and knowledge transfer for increased SSTC, replication and scaling up.

Table 1. Goal, Objectives, and Outcomes of the SKiM Project

Goal		
Develop effective and long-term knowledge management-related capacities in target countries.		
Objectives		
Objective 1. Assess capacity and enhance knowledge management skills of key rural institutions and other stakeholders in Moldova, Morocco, Sudan (with possibility to add two other countries).		Objective 2. Foster and promote knowledge exchange across in-country, cross-country and trans-regional partners to foster knowledge management and transfer.
Outcomes		
Outcome 1. Improved understanding of KM capacities of the key rural institutions in 3 (+2) target countries in NEN region.	Outcome 2. Effective learning systems established and embedded across organizational processes with strengthened human and institutional capacities to manage the systematization of good practices.	Outcome 3. Improved knowledge exchanges among stakeholders based on increased adoption of good practices and knowledge transfer for increased SSTC, replication and scaling up.

Associated targets include more than 60% of participants adopting improved KM approaches and practices in their function, and 600 downloads per year and 3,000 visits per year usage of knowledge products; and three innovation platforms, learning alliances, CoPs or other multi-stakeholder platforms established.

Three corresponding outcomes are to be attained (1) Improved understanding of KM capacities of the key rural institutions in three target countries in NEN region, (2) Effective learning systems established and embedded across organizational processes with strengthened human and institutional capacities to manage the systematization of good practices, and (3) Improved knowledge exchanges among stakeholders based on increased adoption of good practices and knowledge transfer for increased SSTC, replication and scaling up. Beyond SKiM`s sphere of control, the mechanism of its contributions towards the CGIAR SRF 2016-2030 System-level and Intermediate Development Outcomes, and The United Nation`s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are illustrated in the project`s Impact Pathway.

The total project cost is estimated at US$2,115,000 over four years of which IFAD is contributing US$1,800,000 (85%), while cost sharing from in-kind contributions is US$315,000 (15%). US$115,000 is contributed by International Partners while the remaining amounts are sustained by national institutions partnering in the project. Of the grant financing, 30 per cent is to be used to support goods and services and 23 per cent for salaries.

1.2 Purpose of this Document

As the SKiM Project concludes, focus is increased in documenting the approaches, resources needed, and conditions towards successful project results turnover, and takeover of the initiative by stakeholders. This Exit Strategy for Sustainability of Knowledge Management Strengthening Interventions presents what SKiM has delivered towards ensuring project results are taken up by stakeholders, and that these takeover institutions are able to maintain their new level of KM capabilities more independently.

The objectives of this document are:
1. To elaborate the enabling conditions that facilitate the sustainability of SKiM Project results by takeover institutions;
2. to present the knowledge and information resources available to the project stakeholders as they implement processes within a better knowledge management competency level;
3. to outline the activities within the scope of SKiM implementation;
4. to present adminstrative and logistic phasing out exercises.

2. SKiM Sustainability-oriented Activities and Knowledge Results

This chapter forms the core of the strategy SKiM implements to foster sustainability of its results by equipping partner institutions. Broader results level goals, objectives and outcomes are presented first to provide context on the overall orientation of the SKiM project. SKiM`s goal if supported by two objectives and three outcome statements.

The following table presents the sustainability-oriented activities of SKiM mapped to the outputs.This strategy is configured by indicating the activities with projected post-project efficacy. Each activitiy/activity group is then matched to the knowledge produced and shared that is already available. In the last column, remaining knowledge to be produced and shared to stakeholders are identified.

Table 2. Activities implementation, and knowledge production and sharing by SKiM to equip partner stakeholders to take up SKiM Results as takeover institutions

SKiM Outputs	KM-Strengthening Activities (2018-2022)	Key Knowledge Products Delivered (2018-2022)
Output 1. Knowledge management capacity for enhanced formulation of learning needs evaluated	Assessment of knowledge management gaps and needs were conducted with project stakeholders in each of the three countries.	Capacity Needs Assessment; National Writeshops; Capacity Development and Innovation Plans
	Development and Open Access dissemination of knowledge management strategic documentation in ready-to-take-up templates, tailored on the project's stekeholders gaps and needs.	Knowledge Management & Communication Plan; Knowledge Management Strategy
	Formulation of knowledge management communities of practice foundations based on scientific evidence	Terms of Reference for Knowledge Management Platforms (KMP)
	Formulation of knowledge management scientific evidence	Outline & Approach Paper; Systematic Review Protocol for Knowledge Management Interventions and their Contributions to Agricultural Innovations; A Human Machine Hybrid Approach for Systematic Reviews and Maps in International Development and Social Impact Sectors; Scaling Readiness Country Reports in Moldova, Morocco, Sudan; IFAD Evidence Synthesis; Value of Knowledge Assessed in Moldova, Morocco, Sudan; SKiM CoPs Social Networking Analysis

SKiM Outputs	KM-Strengthening Activities (2018-2022)	Key Knowledge Products Delivered (2018-2022)
Output 2. Capacity development and knowledge systematization improved	Deployment and support to project's stakeholders knowledge management trainings, tailored on the project's stekeholders gaps and needs.	Knowledge Management and Capacity Development Best Practice: Valorization and Transfer of Research Results; 2020 SKiM Learning Week Follow-up Course Partners Online Training in Moldova and Sudan; Curriculum for on-demand training course in knowledge management; Innovation & Entrepreneurship Youth Lab; Knowledge Management Strategy in the Agricultural Sector; Knowledge Management Workshop in Sudan; Knowledge and Innovation Transfer through Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs)
	Supported project's stakeholders development of knowledge management information products	Knowledge Management: A Practical Guide for Universities and Research Institutions; institutional videos and success stories; newsletters; scientific presentations, posters, brochures, books and blogs; SKiM Contribution to IFAD Rural Solutions
Output 3. Regional knowledge exchange enhanced	Development of a knowledge management portal to support collection and visualisation of the project's stakeholders knowledge, demosntrating efficacy and fostering uptake of ICT for KM.	Knowledge Management Portal; Portal-Respository interoperability for SAUM (Moldova); Portal-Respository interoperability for UofK (Sudan); MEL Platform induction for INRA Morocco
	Deployment and support to project's stakeholders learning routes, tailored on the project's stekeholders gaps and needs.	Learning routes in Moldova, Morocco and Sudan (Virtual)
	Deployment and support to project's stakeholders knowledge management symposia and CoPs meetings, tailored on the project's stekeholders gaps and needs.	Knowledge Management Symposia in Moldova, Morocco and Sudan; Inception Workshop; National Technical Committees meetings
	Formulation of knowledge management communication products in an Open Access format and ready-to-take-up templates	SKiM Newsletters; Social Media Toolkits; KM videos, blogs, presentations; SKiM Contribution to IFAD KM Resource Center

3. SKiM Exit Activities to Sustain Stakeholders Takeover

Listed below are summary of key interventions conducted in the final project year by SKiM to facilitate stakeholder readiness and related recommendations of actions for stakeholders who will perform as takeover institutions, capitalizing on the results and resource tools produced, transferred and identified within the project implementation.

SKiM Sustainability Interventions (2022)	SKiM Continuity Action Points (2023-forward)
SKiM conducts a Knowledge Management Maturity Level Assessment, as part of the Final Project Evaluation, informing the development of KM Lessons Learned containing lessons learned on knowledge management in the target countries.	Capitalize on the Final Project Evaluation by using its information, in addition to the enhanced capacity and assets trained and supported through SKiM, to strengthen and nurture direct intervention channels with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), facilitating future KM strengthening phases.
The KM Lessons Learned will inform on KM communities of practice network dynamics; injection efficacy of KM tools and solutions by area of interventions during SKiM duration; monitoring, evaluation and learning notes; development and deployment lessons learned on learning routes, symposia, trainings and other capacity development activities; communication, ICT use and knowledge sharing.	Capitalize on SKiM KM Lessons Learned by critically reviewing them and contributing to their information, especially in regard to the national context, consolidating information for enhanced efficacy of future KM interventions in-country, at regional SSTC level and from donor and implementing agencies.
Ensure that all knowledge identified, gathered, developed and shared in the framework of SKiM – by the national stakeholders, the PMU and external partnerships – is properly showcased on the SKiM Knowledge Management Portal, the IFAD KM Resource Center, ICARDA Open Access Repository MELSpace and evaluated for appropriate network analysis of the Knowledge Management Platform supported by SKiM, composed by the national KM CoPs lead by related NTCs.	Capitalize on the extensive Open Access knowledge and information products developed, supported, designed, shared and transferred in the entire duration of the SKiM project, with continued attention to ICT solutions for knowledge management.

4. Governance and Institutional Continuity of SKiM Results

As the SKiM project comes to an end, it is important that there is continuation of net benefits that have accrued from the project to either project`s direct beneficiaries, or to a broader scope of beneficiaries (next- and end-users). Without SKiM intervention after the project implementation, it is important to establish indications that conditions affecting stakeholders can support sustaining project benefits. Such conditions help them maintain their newly gained capability levels of managing and implementing KM systems, and eventually assisting other local institutions develop their KM systems as spill over effects.

Data from the SKiM midterm evaluation (MTE) report indicate that SKIM potential for scale-up is evident. According to IFAD, scaling up occurs when other partners (Government, donors, NGOs, or civil society) use their resources to scale up results. There is indication of government commitment after the project closing date. The MTE finds ministries of agriculture and other relevant institutions, are willing to improve and support their KM systems, instruments, and processes. For example, in Moldova, State Agrarian University of Moldova (SAUM) is renewing their website and advancing the SMART Café initiative. They have produced entrepreneurial videos for youth guidance and better communication and improved their DSpace repository with interoperability settings with SKIM KM Portal. Selectia is developing a website, digitalizing their knowledge for Open Access and has produced a crop catalogue. Institute for Development and Social Initiative (IDIS) Viitorul has produced a KM guide for academic and public institutions.

The MTE finds ministries of agriculture and other relevant institutions, are willing to improve their KM systems, instruments, and processes. In Morocco, IAV Hassan II aims at developing a national KM strategy and is digitalizing knowledge. Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA) has moved toward testing a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system. Ecole Nationale d'Agriculture (ENA) in Meknes is collaborating with IAV Hassan II to develop a national KM strategy and has produced a poster on the climate resilience smart application "IRRI-Smart". National Office of Agricultural Council (ONCA) is collaborating with IAV Hassan II as part of the national KM strategy. In Sudan, Agricultural Research Corporation (ARC)-Sudan is adopting Zoom conferencing and leading a national monthly multi-stakeholder KM forum. Agricultural Research Corporation and Sudanese Knowledge Society (SKS) are preparing a national symposium, building on the SKS "citizen science" approach, and facilitating Sudanese partners to adopt an Open Access – Open Data innovative approach. University of Khartoum (UofK) has an established a DSpace repository and is open to build interoperability with SKIM KM Portal, while SAUM has already primed interoperability settings toward the SKiM KM Portal. CCU-IFAD has expressed interest in digitalizing and repackaging results for better outreach on national scale.

There are clear expressions of government commitment after the project closing date, and ministries of agriculture and other relevant institutions being willing to improve their KM systems, instruments, and processes. While there are conditions concerning other sustainability dimensions that need to be addressed, it is a good outlook that the interest to take up SKIM results are high. These conditions may then support call for investments to maintain and eventually scale up the improved KM state among turnover institutions and ministries.