
Corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's knowledge management practices

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Action: The Executive Board is invited to review the corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's knowledge management practices.

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Executive summary

A. Background

1. As approved by the Executive Board during the 134th session in December 2021, the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) conducted a corporate-level evaluation (CLE) on knowledge management (KM) practices in 2022/2023. The evaluation was expected to inform the **deliberations of the Consultation on the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources**.
2. The IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025 has clearly linked the contribution of KM to IFAD's strategic goals. Together, knowledge-building and dissemination, and policy engagement constitute one of the four pillars for the achievement of IFAD's development results set out in the strategic framework. The **importance of knowledge in delivering transformational change** was further emphasized in the Report of the Consultation on the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (2021).
3. The CLE reviewed the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of KM practices at corporate, regional and country levels for the period 2016 to mid-2023. The CLE assessed how the organization has leveraged its knowledge base for rural transformation, in particular at country level, and to what extent the existing strategies, structures and functions have supported IFAD's ambition to contribute to transformative change in partner countries. The review period was set in a context of ongoing decentralization reforms. Among the factors driving KM during this period were the growing role of IFAD country presence, turnover of staff, and limited resources for non-lending activities. The CLE had a particular focus on how **corporate-level KM practices were linked with KM practices at country level**.
4. The CLE used a theory of change to conceptualize the linkages between KM practices, the drivers and institutional arrangements explaining their existence, and KM results contributing to rural transformation. The conceptual framework for the evaluation was based on **six coexisting generational approaches to knowledge management for development (KM4D)**. Currently, the majority of KM practices in IFAD belong to third and fourth generation KM. Third generation KM includes knowledge-sharing tools and places more emphasis on tacit knowledge. The fourth generation comprises practice-based, people-centric approaches to KM and involves the establishment of inter-organizational communities of practice and the increased role of social media.
5. Informed by the conceptual framework, the evaluation design focused on exploring a set of **hypotheses** that cover causal linkages between KM strategies, tools, practices and key enabling factors and how they interact to deliver observed KM results at corporate, regional division and country programme level. These hypotheses were tested in the evaluation process, and explanatory factors and alternative explanations were identified. The evaluation drew its evidence from **six evidence blocks, including a corporate document review, surveys, interviews and focus group discussions**. The CLE obtained evidence on KM results from 20 country case studies and five regional division studies.

B. Findings

6. **KM practices were often effective in their contribution to country programmes.** Clear KM frameworks and strategies aligned with on-the-ground needs and country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) priorities enabled success, while fragmented approaches compromised sustainability. There were fewer cases where the systematic generation and sharing of knowledge have enabled effective policy engagement. Transformative (fifth and sixth generation) practices were supported by strong leadership in the IFAD country offices and multi-stakeholder partnerships for KM, which included beneficiaries, NGOs and governmental bodies. Multi-stakeholder processes beyond individual projects created

better platforms for policy influence. Strategic regional grants also supported policy-oriented KM. Participatory processes validated local insights, blended knowledge systems and exchanged grassroots innovations. Innovative and transformational KM practices were often funded through regular grants.

7. **KM partnerships were key for IFAD to access external knowledge and to introduce innovative practices.** While IFAD collaborates in some networks, it does not fully leverage platforms discussing contemporary KM concepts like local knowledge and decolonization. In most countries, partners value IFAD's grassroots expertise, thematic knowledge, convening ability, country presence and focus on learning and innovation. The CLE also found examples where IFAD has helped facilitate subregional knowledge exchange. Nevertheless, its limited country presence has put a tangible constraint on its engagement in coordination mechanisms. IFAD has not sufficiently addressed demand for technical know-how and South-South cooperation in middle-income countries.
8. **The corporate KM strategy was not sufficient to guide KM practices in partner countries.** The 2019 KM strategy was well aligned to IFAD's strategic framework and decentralization, reflecting contemporary good practices that received awards. Nevertheless, the strategy had major gaps that undermined its effectiveness as a corporate document. This includes unclear KM roles across the organization, lack of attention to Indigenous knowledge, and assumptions on resourcing and incentives at decentralized levels that did not hold. A major deficit in the KM strategy was the lack of an effective monitoring and reporting system for KM results. Consequently, regional divisions adopted their own approaches to integrate KM within their specific contexts. Some of them prepared regional KM frameworks, established knowledge repositories in regional languages and defined their divisional goals on KM. At country level, the CLE often found fragmented, ad hoc KM approaches responding to immediate needs. The more successful approaches usually relied on the experience and commitment of individual country directors.
9. The KM architecture did not follow the ongoing decentralization process, as envisaged by the 2019 KM strategy. The 2019 KM action plan was overly focused on the Strategy and Knowledge Department (SKD), resulting in limited attention to IFAD's internal and external knowledge systems. The simultaneous creation of multiple KM-related units – such as the Change, Delivery and Innovation Unit under the Office of the President and Vice-President, and the South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) function within the Global Engagement, Partnership and Resource Mobilization Division (GPR) in 2019 – contributed to the fragmentation of KM roles in IFAD. Moving the technical arm (Policy and Technical Advisory Division) of the Programme Management Department (PMD) to SKD and concentrating responsibilities for implementing the KM action plan in the SKD front office has made KM coordination and guidance across the organization more challenging. The roles of the three SSTC/KM centres were insufficiently defined and, with the exception of the Latin America and the Caribbean Division, less effective in supporting regional knowledge exchanges. Progress on decentralizing SKD staff has been slow, limiting KM support to countries. Loaded with project-related tasks, SKD and PMD experts had minimal time for supporting knowledge-sharing at country and regional levels.
10. **Financial resources for KM were limited and unevenly distributed.** An examination of the regional divisions indicated an uneven distribution of financial and human resources. At country level, KM is grossly under-resourced and relies on ad hoc measures to plug funding gaps. Loan-based KM financing is limited and tracking it in systems is complicated by inconsistent data. In the past, grants had been a key instrument to position IFAD as a knowledge player at global, regional and country levels; their sharp decrease during IFAD12 had a major impact on regional-level KM. IFAD's administrative KM budget increased slightly between 2018 and 2021 and was allocated mainly to SKD, the External Relations and Governance Department (ERG) and PMD. Supplementary funds significantly enabled KM, but staff resources were concentrated at IFAD headquarters.

11. **IFAD knowledge products are biased towards research and available in only a few languages, limiting their utility for country stakeholders.** While IFAD's publications addressed key themes, most were in English only. Technical knowledge made up the largest share of IFAD's knowledge products, while experiential and policy knowledge from country programmes was minimal. Though IFAD's research division expanded its scope, corporate knowledge did not adequately capture the on-the-ground expertise and Southern knowledge critical for rural transformation. Initiatives to leverage operational experiences, like experience capitalization, were not continued. The review showed that knowledge products would have been more relevant if they integrated scientific knowledge with technical, local, Indigenous and community knowledge, and also involved participatory, multi-stakeholder processes.
12. **There is scope to enhance the cost-effectiveness of KM given the existing budgetary constraints.** The CLE estimated average costs versus outreach for key IFAD knowledge products. Products developed in collaboration with country offices, such as the "advantage series" and policy briefs, showed a good balance of costs and outreach. Research products such as the impact assessments and the Rural Development Report were more costly and aimed at global outreach. The harmonization exercise initiated a few years ago would have been an opportunity to enhance the cost-effectiveness of the publication series. IFAD is currently short of lower-cost products with strong utility for country programmes. Cost-effective KM practices at programme level include field-level exchanges and hold potential for improving project performance. Preparation of KM strategies or action plans is time-consuming, and their relevance is time-bound, leading to lower cost-effectiveness. SKD's knowledge clinics are a cost-effective way to provide targeted, demand-driven guidance to country programmes. Contrary to perceptions, low-cost communication and social media tools were often cost-effective, in particular in fragile situations.
13. **More adequate and easy-to-access knowledge repositories would enable staff to share operational experiences more effectively.** Digital platforms and communities of practice (CoPs) have enabled the increase in knowledge-sharing events within IFAD since 2016. The more active platforms usually required dedicated facilitators and funding, which was not always available. Beyond the corporate platforms, there is a demand for platforms providing contextualized knowledge in local languages. The CoPs have helped bundle knowledge, expertise and data. The CoPs played an important role in introducing and sharing knowledge on new topics (e.g. geographic information systems) and supporting knowledge acquisition for newly arrived staff. Their effectiveness depended on staff engagement and thoughtful facilitation. Platforms and CoPs are low-cost options, but their proliferation has made maintenance and sustained funding more challenging.
14. Heavy workloads, understaffed country offices, vacant positions and knowledge drain due to reassignment and turnover of staff were recurrent themes hindering sustained KM initiatives. Staff is the key asset for IFAD and in all cases reviewed, success depended on the individual motivation and commitment of staff. Full-time KM positions were scarce and mostly funded from supplementary funds. In 2022, there were eight full-time KM officers in 2022: seven in SKD and one in ERG (the Communications Division). Country programme staff have KM among their responsibilities and often insufficient time to focus on specific KM tasks. Use of consultants to initiate and sustain KM practices in regional and headquarters divisions was a common practice, but it limited ownership and integration within the organization. Knowledge retention was a persistent challenge exacerbated by staff reassignments. The evaluation noted the absence of systematic plans for capturing and transferring tacit knowledge before staff departure in many countries.

C. Conclusions

15. The CLE reviewed a period that has seen major strategic developments and organizational reforms. The extent of these changes and their disjointed nature

made it challenging for the organization to discharge a forceful organization-wide KM initiative in line with the ambitions of its KM strategy.

16. **The KM architecture is lagging behind the unfolding decentralization process.** IFAD has made substantive progress in enhancing its field presence since 2019; country directors, who have a responsibility for KM in partner countries, are now outposted. In order to fulfil its decentralization targets, IFAD has dismantled some of the headquarters-based Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division (PMI) teams that had been leading knowledge exchange at the global level, for example on rural finance, by deploying them to different regions. The SKD staff outposted to decentralized offices retain a reporting line to headquarters, limiting their integration into the decentralized structure. Nevertheless, the majority of SKD staff, especially those at senior levels, remain at headquarters. Providing effective support to regions while maintaining visibility and excellence globally in areas that are of strategic importance for IFAD will be a balancing act.
17. **IFAD's institutional set-up for KM is not adequate to position IFAD as a knowledge player in rural transformation within the larger landscape. The formal KM architecture, focused on SKD, does not support the organization-wide nature of KM in IFAD and the diversity of KM roles within the organization.** The Knowledge Management Coordination Group (KMCG) has been useful as an organization-wide platform for knowledge-sharing. As a convener of the KMCG, the SKD front office does not have the capacity to support more coherent and effective KM across the various departments. IFAD's ambition to contribute to rural transformation, including scaling up solutions, requires recognizing the different roles in KM that would adequately consolidate and share different types of knowledge with its stakeholders at global, regional and country levels. IFAD's knowledge is produced in a piecemeal, fragmented, "projectized" way, without thinking strategically about contributions to necessary systemic changes needed for rural transformation. There is no overarching knowledge agenda to enable such a systems approach to knowledge generation and sharing.
18. **Gaps in KM capacity and senior guidance were the underlying reasons for the absence of evidence on KM effectiveness.** IFAD's conceptualization of the role of KM within the organization demonstrates its commitment to using KM to enhance its development effectiveness, recognizing its importance in serving clients through improved programmes and policy support. Yet IFAD does not have the frameworks in place to demonstrate its effectiveness as a knowledge provider at corporate, regional and country levels. KM budgets and results are not being tracked, and reporting of corporate-level results is focused on headquarters-based activities only. As front-line implementers of KM in IFAD, regional divisions struggle to adequately support KM activities. This dovetails with structural challenges: the absence of dedicated KM frameworks in some areas points to gaps in strategic planning and KM prioritization. The challenge deepens with lack of capacity and sustainable human resources support. Relying on sporadic grants, supplementary funds or project savings introduces uncertainties, hinting at shortfalls in long-term KM planning. Such an approach, while rendering short-term benefits, poses risks for enduring results.
19. **Evidence from CLE case studies found positive examples where KM practices in countries have shown results, but overall, they require more support.** Evidence from the country case studies demonstrates that IFAD has the potential and knowledge to deliver highly transformative KM practices at country level, which can support rural transformation, and in some cases has been able to do so. Projects depend considerably on IFAD support for institutionalizing KM. There is no set body of experiences being leveraged in any country to build foundational capacity for KM during design or implementation. Approaches were typically one off or ad hoc; lack of institutional capturing of these experiences has led to an inconsistent and fractured approach to KM. Later generation practices based on multi-stakeholder engagement offer the most tangible routes towards development results for rural

transformation but are impacted by the absence of a supportive structure and a limited foundational understanding of the role of KM within projects. Knowledge partnerships can enhance IFAD's effectiveness and impact for rural transformation, as shown by the country case studies. They also strengthen the efficiency of IFAD's KM practices and increase the likelihood of the sustainability of practices and their results.

20. **The CLE highlights the challenges that IFAD will have to address in order to become more effective and efficient in the generation and use of knowledge.** IFAD's internal structures and mechanisms have not been conducive to effective and efficient KM practices. Knowledge retention mechanisms have not been sufficient to mitigate knowledge attrition under IFAD's decentralization and reassignment policies. This was in part due to a lack of well-functioning digital platforms to enable sufficient storage and sharing of knowledge. The absence of senior KM specialists and the scarcity of full-time knowledge managers within the organization are obstacles to professionalizing KM. Currently, KM expertise and performance are neither well recognized nor incentivized. The reduced availability of regular grants for KM is a limitation that IFAD will have to overcome in order to introduce innovative (fifth and sixth generation) KM practices.
21. **Knowledge will be key for IFAD to raise its relevance as a development player.** Knowledge is vital to ensuring that the organization advances to the forefront of rural transformation. IFAD can play a key role in translating knowledge from operations and contribute to the global understanding of how rural transformation can happen. In order to do so, IFAD needs to align its knowledge products and the knowledge embedded in its projects. Currently, knowledge from operations is not effectively synthesized and integrated with rigorous assessments for scaling up. Successful mobilization of resources will require IFAD to keep abreast of the latest developments and good practices. Artificial intelligence offers huge potential for IFAD in terms of searching its complex of internal databases and navigating external knowledge. However, this potential and the related challenges are moving targets as the field develops very rapidly, making it extremely important for IFAD KM staff to continue in knowledge partnerships.

D. Recommendations

22. The proposed recommendations address the above challenges within the current resource constraints. To some extent, IFAD could mitigate resource constraints through more effective and efficient utilization of existing capacities and resources. In addition, the CLE recommends that resources for KM should be mobilized through reallocations of internal funding and additional resources from knowledge partnerships.
23. **Recommendation 1: IFAD should reclaim its role in elevating the operational knowledge it generates to a global level in order to inform the rural transformation debate.**
 - 1(a) The current KM strategy should be complemented by a lighter, more flexible **knowledge agenda** outlining the goals and priorities of KM throughout IFAD, with a greater emphasis on rural transformation and fifth and sixth generation practices, such as multi-stakeholder processes and recognizing the importance of local knowledge in country programmes. This will also involve more pluralistic definitions of knowledge and cover the relevant non-lending areas, including SSTC, country-level policy engagement and innovation.
 - 1(b) **Knowledge partnerships** should be at the core of the IFAD approach to KM and will lead to greater effectiveness and impact. They will also strengthen the efficiency of IFAD's KM practices and increase the likelihood of the sustainability of practices and their results. The agenda would guide stronger engagement with knowledge partnerships at global, regional and country levels.

- 1(c) To address the fragmented institutional framework, IFAD should establish a **small strategic office at executive level** with adequate capacity to guide the implementation of the knowledge agenda. The office would be in charge of initiating, developing and managing the knowledge agenda for IFAD.
 - 1(d) **Communities of practice** should be more systematically used to support innovation and learning; their performance should be monitored.
24. **Recommendation 2: IFAD Management should initiate a decisive shift away from its overly centralized KM architecture and allocate sufficient human and financial resources across decentralized levels.**
- 2(a) The ongoing decentralization in IFAD would also require more **devolved responsibilities and resources for KM**, with a lighter touch in terms of central planning and reporting. The decentralized KM roles currently in PMI, the Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division and GPR should be firmly integrated into regional structures and reporting lines adjusted accordingly. Reporting on SSTC and KM should be carried out by regional divisions (PMD) to provide effective support for country offices.
 - 2(b) Regional divisions should consolidate the available **KM capacities** dispersed throughout the organization and appoint full-time knowledge managers responsible for consolidating knowledge from operations and facilitating knowledge exchanges with stakeholders at country and regional levels. Gaps in KM expertise could be compensated by leveraging knowledge partnerships.
 - 2(c) Regional divisions should develop a framework for monitoring the effectiveness of KM practices at regional and country levels, with adequate indicators to measure **KM outcomes** in terms of changing KM behaviours, skills and capacities as well as the uptake and use of knowledge products. Performance on KM should be recognized and adequately rewarded.
 - 2(d) The **KMCG** should play an important role as an inclusive platform to support good practices on KM across regions. The **KM resource centre** should continue providing standardized formats and knowledge resources across the organization.
25. **Recommendation 3: IFAD Management should monitor KM effectiveness and focus on KM practices and products that provide the best value for money at global and operational levels.**
- 3(a) **Monitoring of knowledge products and platforms** needs to be results-focused so that choices can be made between the most effective products and platforms.
 - 3(b) Divisions should adopt a **consistent and comparable budgeting system** for KM, with regional divisions monitoring the cost-effectiveness of the KM practices at regional and country levels.
 - 3(c) Prioritize KM practices that involve local partners in the **co-creation of knowledge**, linking different knowledge systems. Knowledge practices that involve multiple stakeholders are likely to be more effective and sustainable.
 - 3(d) **Annual reports on budget use** and KM results should be submitted to the President.
26. **Recommendation 4: IFAD's next strategic framework should define how knowledge would enable IFAD to position itself as a driver of rural transformation within a global context of uncertainty and crisis.**
- 4(a) **Knowledge production** should be guided by a systems approach connecting the multiple dimensions of transformative change and the stakeholders and partners who would contribute to this knowledge. Demand, quality and

cost-effectiveness should be among the key criteria driving knowledge generation and sharing.

- 4(b) Knowledge management should aim at contributing to the “bigger, better and smarter” dimension of IFAD’s framework through its role in **scaling up, replication and policy engagement** for transformational change.
- 4(c) Enhancing the effectiveness of corporate KM should be an integral part of IFAD’s **reform agenda**. IFAD would need to define its comparative advantage relative to other strong KM players among international financial institutions and the private sector who are also supporting transformative change.
- 4(d) **Application of international standards** would raise the bar for KM in IFAD. The International Standards Organization (ISO) 30401 (on KM systems) provides common definitions and standards for organizational processes that IFAD should consider for its future KM strategy.

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- Data collection, analysis and synthesis
- Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey results
- Hypotheses and supporting probe questions

Abbreviations and acronyms

4Ps	Public-Private-Producer Partnership
ADB	Asian Development Bank
APR	Asia and Pacific Division, IFAD
ARIE	Annual Report on the Independent Evaluation of IFAD
ARRI	Annual Report on Results and Impact, IFAD
AVP	Associate Vice-President
AWPB	Annual Work Plan and Budget
CD	Country Director
CDI	Change, Delivery and Innovation Unit, IFAD
CEPAL	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CLE	Corporate-level evaluation
CLPE	Country Level Policy Engagement
COM	Global Communications and Advocacy Division
CoP	Community of Practice
COSOP	Country Strategic Opportunities Programme
CSPE	Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation
CSSG	Corporate Services Support Group
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EB	Executive Board
ECG	Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division, IFAD
EMC	Executive Management Committee
ERG	External Relations and Governance Department, IFAD
ESA	East and Southern Africa Division, IFAD
ESR	Evaluation synthesis report
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFS	Farmer Field School
FGD	Focus-group discussion
FMD	Financial Management Services Division, IFAD
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GFRID	Global Forum on Remittances, Investment and Development
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GPR	Global Engagement, Partnership and Resource Mobilization Division, IFAD
HR	Human resources
ICO	IFAD Country Office
ICT/ICTs	Information and Communications Technology Division, IFAD/Information and communication technologies
ICT4D	Information and Communication Technology for Development
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IOE	Independent Office of Evaluation, IFAD
K-packs	Knowledge packs

KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices
KM	Knowledge management
KM4D	Knowledge management for development
KMCG	Knowledge Management Coordination Group
KMCO	KM committee
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean Division, IFAD
LR	Learning Route
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCO	Multicountry Office
MDLP	Multi-Donor Partnership on Learning for Development Impact
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur (Southern Common Market)
MICs	middle-income countries
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
MTR	Mid-term review
NEN	Near East, North Africa and Europe Division, IFAD
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OBI	Oracle Business Intelligence
ODC	Operations Document Centre
OPR	Operational Policy and Results Division, IFAD
PMD	Programme Management Department
PMI	Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division
PMU	Project management unit
PROCASUR	Corporation for Regional Rural Development Training
PTA	Policy and Technical Advisory Division
QAG	Quality Assurance Group
RBA	Rome-based agencies
REAF	MERCOSUR Commission on Family Farming
RIA	Research and Impact Assessment Division
RIDE	IFAD's development effectiveness
RMF	Results Measurement Framework
SAFIN	Smallholder and Agri-SME Finance and Investment Network
SKD	Strategy and Knowledge Department
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SSTC	South-South and Triangular Cooperation
ToC	Theory of change
UMIC	Upper Middle-Income Countries
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
WCA	West and Central Africa Division, IFAD

I. Evaluation objectives and methodology

A. Background

1. As approved by the Executive Board during the 134th session in December 2021, the IFAD Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) conducted a Corporate Level Evaluation (CLE) of Knowledge Management Practices in 2022/2023.¹ The CLE reviewed the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of knowledge management (KM) practices at corporate, regional and country levels for the period 2016 to mid-2023.
2. Knowledge is a critical element of IFAD's medium-term strategy for delivering transformative rural development. The ongoing IFAD Strategic Framework (2016 – 2025) aims to maximize its comparative advantage by working "*bigger, better and smarter*": It will mobilize and leverage substantially greater investment in rural areas; strengthen the quality of countries' rural development programmes through evidence-based innovation, knowledge-sharing, partnerships and policy engagement; and deliver development results more cost-effectively. Knowledge and its effective management play an important role in all three areas.
3. Knowledge building, dissemination and policy engagement together represent one of the four pillars for the achievement of IFAD's development results set out in the Strategic Framework. The **importance of knowledge in delivering transformational change** was further emphasised in the 2021 Report of the Consultation on the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources. IFAD conducted a mid-term review (MTR) of the IFAD 2019-2025 KM strategy in 2022. The MTR focussed on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Strategy and the action plan (2019-2021) and will inform the preparation of a new KM Action Plan 2023-2025.
4. The scope for this CLE goes beyond the KM strategy and its implementation. The evaluation is using the IFAD Strategic Framework (2016-2025) to position the contribution of KM within IFAD strategic goals. The strategic framework has guided the development of the 2019 KM strategy but is also going beyond it by defining the broader strategic ambitions for IFAD in support of rural transformation. The CLE aims to assess how the organization has leveraged its knowledge base for rural transformation, in particular at country level, and to what extent the existing strategies, structures and functions have supported IFAD's ambition to contribute to transformative change in partner countries. The evaluation has a particular focus on the **linkage between corporate level KM practice and actual KM practice at country level**.
5. With this approach, the evaluation is expected to inform the ongoing **deliberations on the IFAD13 replenishment**. The business model for IFAD13, proposed by Management, already notes that knowledge is intrinsic to IFAD's business model: "Generating cutting-edge knowledge helps to increase IFAD's visibility, credibility and influence as a trusted partner." The evaluation aims to assist IFAD further defining its positioning itself as knowledge partner on rural transformation within the larger development landscape.
6. The ongoing decentralization process has fundamentally changed the way knowledge is generated and shared with partners in countries and within IFAD itself.² The CLE reviews **how KM has performed and delivered in the decentralised structure** during the period 2016 - 2022. It also explores important aspects that are driving KM in IFAD in the context of decentralisation, such as the growing role of IFAD country presence, turnover of staff, and limited resources for non-lending activities.
7. The evaluation was conducted in a rapidly changing international environment. At the midpoint of the Agenda 2030, multiple global crises are undermining progress on

¹ EB document. <https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/134/docs/EB-2021-134-R-3-Rev-1.pdf>

² The IOE CLE on decentralisation examines the effects of these organisational reforms on partnership, knowledge management and policy engagement.

the the Sustainable Development Goals.³ Levels of official development assistance have increased, but funding is increasingly absorbed by the changing priorities of donor country spending, such as hosting refugees and aid to Ukraine.

8. **Knowledge management, at the heart of IFAD's strategic approach and an intrinsic part of the response to crises, is also evolving quickly.** Rapid digitalization, including artificial intelligence and machine learning, and evolving social media are changing the way IFIs and development organizations share and broker knowledge. At the same time, there is greater societal emphasis on diversity and inclusion as it relates knowledge. Within international development, this has led to efforts to decolonize knowledge by dismantling fundamental inequities of the knowledge system. One aspect of this is awareness of the need for greater inclusion of knowledge and knowledge holders from multiple peripheries.

B. Purpose, Objectives and Scope

9. The **purpose** of the CLE is to help the organisation appreciate the diversity of practices and types of knowledge which are relevant to its work and achieve a shared, more coherent understanding of the role KM plays in the context of IFAD's rural transformation agenda. The findings, conclusions and recommendations of the CLE will support IFAD management and staff in the uptake of good KM practices. It will also support the Executive Board in its accountability function, amongst other things by informing the deliberations during the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's resources.
10. The CLE has three **objectives**:
- (i) Objective 1: To assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency of current KM practices at corporate, regional and country levels.
 - (ii) Objective 2: To review and identify lessons from other development organizations that IFAD can use to improve its KM performance in the future.
 - (iii) Objective 3: To articulate what is needed in KM to help IFAD pursue the objectives of its rural transformation agenda.
11. The **scope** of the CLE is the period from 2016 to mid-2023, which coincides with IFAD's current strategic framework (2016 – 2025). IFAD's current KM strategy was prepared in 2019. The CLE will cover KM practices at corporate, regional and country levels.
12. The CLE will address three overarching evaluation questions (EQs).
- (i) EQ1: How relevant and coherent are the current KM practices given the mandate and needs of the organization and within the global, regional, and local context in which IFAD works (relevance and internal coherence)?
 - (ii) EQ2: To what extent has IFAD through its KM practices effectively contributed to rural transformation and what factors can explain its performance (effectiveness)?
 - (iii) EQ3: How efficient has been the use of the available (financial and human) resources to deliver the KM strategy, KM practices and KM results (operational and institutional efficiency)?
13. For each overarching question, sub-questions are presented in the evaluation framework (Annex II).

³ A preliminary assessment of the roughly 140 targets for which data is available undertaken by the United Nations shows that only about 12 per cent are on track and some 30 per cent have either seen no movement or regressed below the 2015 baseline. As the United Nations Secretary General has stated "It is time to sound the alarm". (Ref needed)

C. Terminology for this CLE

14. This section provides clarification of some key terms adopted for the purpose of this CLE. A longer list of terms is included in the glossary (Annex IV). All terms in the glossary are identified with an asterisk*.

Knowledge* is the awareness, understanding, or information that has been obtained by experience or study, and that is either in a person's mind or possessed by people generally (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). There are different types of knowledge in IFAD. Internal knowledge* comprises explicit, implicit, and tacit knowledge. This knowledge is invested in individual members of staff as practices but also carried by KM tools and products. There is also external knowledge*, such as policy knowledge*, scientific knowledge*, technical knowledge*, local knowledge*, and indigenous knowledge*.

15. The fundamental question for this evaluation is how were KM functions, mechanisms and processes institutionalised and systematically followed to improve IFAD's operational performance and development effectiveness. Therefore, the CLE uses a pragmatic definition of KM, which captures the evaluation's explicit focus on KM practices and the impact of KM at country level. For purpose of this CLE **knowledge Management** is defined as:

The systematic management of the generation, sharing, use and brokering* of substantive* knowledge through tools and practices at organizational and individual levels with a view to enhance IFAD's role and contribution to rural transformation globally and in partner countries.

16. **Knowledge management practices** relate to the choices and behaviours made by individual staff, organizational units and the organization as a whole, both formally and informally, to generate, use and share knowledge. These choices are based on their understanding, on their skills and expertise, their attitudes, the tools and resources they have at their disposal, and the wider environment in which they are embedded. For IFAD, these practices include: using platforms, systems and processes for sharing knowledge and learning; building internal capacity; applying evidence and experience to policy engagement & programmes; and engaging and learning with development partners. Practices are dependent on strategy and the enabling environment. Knowledge management practices are defined as:

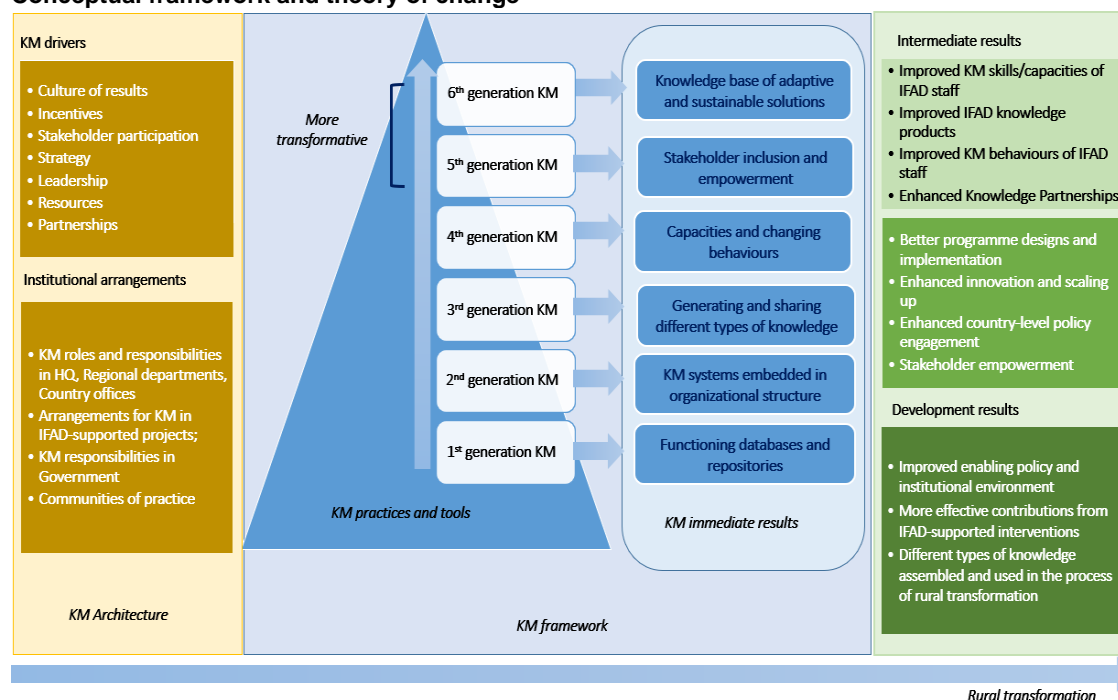
A shared repertoire of resources developed by practitioners, including experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems and integrating lessons learnt. KM practices relate to 'how' knowledge is generated, shared, used and brokered by IFAD. These practices involve personal and organization choices, behaviours and insights of individual staff, organizational units and the organization as a whole, both formally and informally.

D. Conceptual framework

17. The CLE uses a theory of change (ToC) to conceptualise the linkages between KM practices, the drivers and institutional arrangements explaining their existence, and KM results contributing to rural transformation. Figure 1 provides a schematic overview of the ToC. The elaborated ToC is included in Annex I. The CLE also elaborated the underlying assumptions, which underpin the ToC, and assessed their validity. The definitions used in the ToC were pragmatically aligned with IFAD's Strategic Framework to focus on the implementation of KM practices across the organization rather than limiting its scope to only the 2019 KM strategy and Action Plan. The CLE aimed to examine KM practices and activities at corporate, regional and country level, achieving a broader reach and ambition than what the aforementioned documents could capture.

Figure 1

Conceptual framework and theory of change



Source: CLE team

18. The ToC illustrates **how KM is expected to help IFAD position itself globally by working "bigger, better and smarter"**, as defined in the SF (2016-2025). In order to become "better", IFAD would need to enhance the quality of its country programme. IFAD would also generate knowledge on issues related to inclusive and sustainable rural transformation for policy engagement. The two development results are captured in the ToC. As a third development result the ToC includes assembling of different types of knowledge, including scientific, operational, indigenous and local knowledge. This is in recognition that different types of knowledge are needed to solve complex or wicked problems; the knowledge of all stakeholders, and particularly marginalized ones, is an important component of epistemic (knowledge-related) justice.
19. As a priority for IFAD working "smarter" the SF (2016-2025) includes fostering a culture of excellence and results across the organisation. The ToC includes results culture as a driver for KM. Results-focus, innovation, critical self-reflection, and discussions to effect sustained improvements to operations are key elements of a results culture and a driver for effective KM. It also provides incentives for staff to engage in KM. Other drivers are adequate leadership, strategy and resource for KM. Finally, stakeholder participation is a driver for KM as it enables knowledge sharing and ownership.
20. The ToC shows immediate KM results, intermediate KM results and the development results to which KM is expected to contribute. The immediate results include generating and sharing different types of knowledge, enhanced capacities and skills, and stakeholder inclusion and empowerment. Intermediate results include improvements and changes, for example with regard to staff capacities, knowledge products, and partnerships all contributing to improved programme results and implementation, more successful innovation and scaling up, and enhanced policy engagement.
21. The framework assumes that KM results would contribute to transformative development through three broader development results: i) **improved enabling policy and institutional environment**; ii) **more effective operations**; and iii) **better use of different types of knowledge**. Together, these three development results contribute to rural transformation and greater progress towards the Agenda

2030. In particular the practices from the 5th and 6th generations are expected to contribute to transformative processes by developing a knowledge base of adaptive and sustainable solutions.
22. The conceptual framework for the evaluation is based around **six, co-existing generational approaches to Knowledge Management for Development (KM4D)**.⁴ Each of these generations has introduced new KM concepts and tools for greater understandings of KM4D. Currently, the majority of KM practices in IFAD belong to the third and fourth generation KM. Third generation KM includes knowledge sharing tools, such as After Action Review, the peer assist, case studies and best practices; and more emphasis on tacit knowledge. The fourth generation comprises practice-based, people centric approaches to KM and involves the establishment of inter-organizational communities of practice; and the increased role of social media.
23. The fifth generation with its more holistic focus on the development knowledge ecology or system has been developed with the growing understanding that many different types of knowledge, such as local knowledge and technical knowledge, are needed to solve 'wicked'* or complex problems (Brown et al, 2010) and that knowledge is a global public good. More recently, a sixth generation of KM4D has emerged labelled 'decolonization of knowledge' which recognises the value of indigenous knowledge as well as current organizational efforts to address increase diversity, equality, and inclusion (Boyes et al, 2023).⁵ The higher generations, particularly the 5th and 6th, are characterised by an implicit recognition of the relevance of the wider knowledge ecosystem and of many different types of knowledges, linking organizational and societal knowledge.

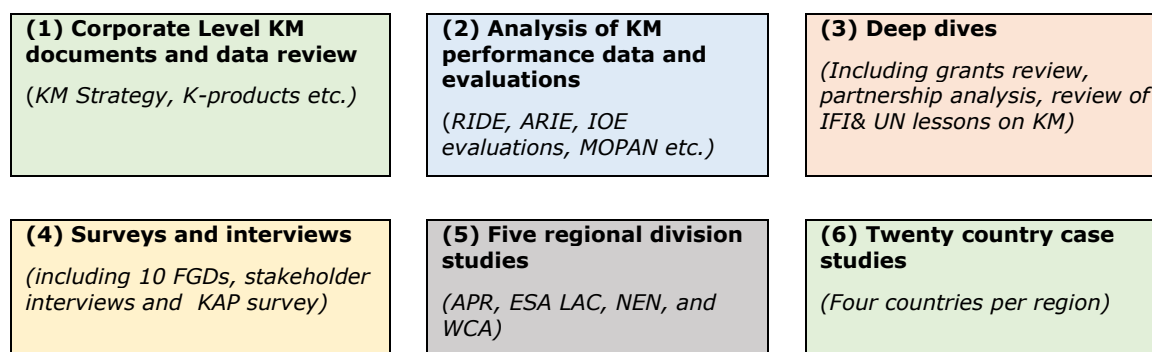
E. Methodology

24. Informed by the conceptual framework, the evaluation design focused on the exploration of a set of **hypotheses** that cover causal linkages between KM strategies, tools, practices, and key enabling factors and how they interact to deliver observed KM results at corporate, regional division and country programme level. These hypotheses were tested in the evaluation process and explanatory factors and alternative explanations identified. The linkages and concepts captured in the ToC as well as the hypotheses have led to the development of the **evaluation framework** (see Annex II).
25. The framework was the core of the evaluation approach and linked evaluation questions, sub-questions, indicators and the sources of evidence in the form of a series of **six evidence blocks**. Each evidence block utilized multiple data collection methods and sources. In turn, each sub-question used the evidence from one or multiple blocks. The evidence blocks are illustrated in figure 2 below.

⁴ Cummings, S., Kiwanuka, S., Gillman, H., & Regeer, B. (2019). The future of knowledge brokering: perspectives from a generational framework of knowledge management for international development. *Information Development*, 35(5), 781–794. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266666918800174>

⁵ Boyes, B., S.J.R. Cummings, F. Tesfaye Habtemariam and G. Kemboi. 2023. 'We have a dream': proposing decolonization of knowledge as a sixth generation of knowledge management for sustainable development. Special Issue on 'Uncomfortable truths in international development: approaches to the decolonization of knowledge from development practice, policy and research.' *Knowledge Management for Development Journal* 17(1/2): 11-41.

Figure 2
CLE Evidence Blocks



Source: CLE Approach Paper

26. During the synthesis phase, the evaluation team assessed the extent to which the evidence was adequate and could be triangulated through using the various sources and methods. Constraints in the availability and quality of data were in particular noted for evidence blocks 1 and 2 (see limitations).
27. Due to the paucity of corporate data on KM effectiveness, the evaluation mainly used evidence on KM results from **country case studies**, drawn from documents review and stakeholder interviews. The evaluation selected twenty country case studies,⁶ four of them involving country visits (China, Egypt, Kenya and Viet Nam), and in-depth studies of KM in the five regional divisions. The selection of case study countries aimed to capture a diversity of KM practices influenced by factors such as country income status, portfolio size, and IFAD presence. Due to the recent assignment of staff, the team also had to consider the availability of staff in country. Following the piloting of the case study methodology in 2022, the CLE had developed guidance on process and documentation, including standardised reporting formats, which helped to ensure the consistency of case study findings. Following a documents' review and landscape analysis, the case study team to interview between 10-20 stakeholders per country. The research, conducted in French, English, Portuguese, Spanish, and Chinese, benefited from a multilingual team, which mitigated language barriers in country selection. In some countries, namely Vietnam, Egypt, and Kyrgyzstan, interpreters were utilized. The case studies were enriched by participatory evaluation videos in Peru and Brazil, in order to incorporate perspectives from local and indigenous groups involved in IFAD-funded interventions.
28. Beyond the case studies the CLE incorporated a diverse set of perspectives across the organization through **surveys, regional studies, outlier analysis, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**. More than ten focus group discussions, counting 75 participants (outside IOE), covered thematic and institutional issues beyond the case studies. Overall, the evaluation incorporated inputs from approximately 550 stakeholders, including 190 current and former IFAD staff. Due to the voluntary nature of participation, there was a tendency for those with a keen interest in KM to participate more. Recent staff turnover and reassignments complicated the inclusion of former stakeholders, who may otherwise have been interviewed for this CLE. Incomplete contact lists maintained by country offices sometimes posed a challenge for reaching out to external stakeholders.
29. The Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) survey brought in responses from a larger IFAD in all regions: 83 responses were received which reflected a broader range of perspectives.⁷ The second survey on Platforms and Communities of Practice was sent to internal and external audiences through the Knowledge Management

⁶ The list of case study countries is included in Annex IV, which also explains the case study methodology.

⁷ The survey consisted of a set of KM related questions of which nine were multiple choice and two open-ended. The survey was sent to IFAD staff through the general mailing lists. (Annex VII)

Coordination Group; it did not provide an adequate number of responses (fewer than 50) and the results were not included in the analysis. In addition, the evaluation used existing data from corporate surveys such as the Client Survey (>2000 respondents between 2020 and 2022) and the Global Staff Survey (>500 respondents for 2022).

30. **Thematic deep dives** (evidence block 3) contributed to the corporate perspective of this evaluation through cross-cutting reviews, such as review of grants and partnerships. The review of “signature solutions” focussed on specific knowledge solutions that were widely shared in IFAD (see Chapter IV.D.)
31. The CLE team **synthesised** and structured findings from the six blocks of evidence around the conceptual framework to develop a ‘system’-level picture of KM at IFAD, looking at how these factors contributed to the delivery of the development impacts identified in the conceptual framework. It also determined the status of current KM practices against the six-generation framework and the potential of these practices to contribute to rural transformation.

F. Process

32. **The evaluation phases.** The evaluation involved a preparatory phase (document review, preparation of approach paper, and meeting with IOE Advisory Panel) and a design phase (piloting of case study methodology, stakeholder consultations, participatory videos and finalization of approach paper, stakeholder consultations). This was followed by the main data collection phase, a synthesis phase and reporting phase.
33. **Learning process.** As the purpose of this CLE includes to “achieve a shared, more coherent understanding of the role KM plays in the context of IFAD’s rural transformation agenda”, the team worked closely with members of the Knowledge Management Coordination Group (KMCG) and other concerned stakeholders, including those involved in country case studies. More than 10 FGDs and group interviews involving IFAD staff and managers from all divisions provided opportunities for sharing and reflection. The CLE also conducted FGDs with retirees and the IFAD Youth Net to discuss issues of knowledge retention.
34. **Quality assurance and enhancement.** An independent Senior Advisor, Zenda Ofir, provided quality-enhancement and quality-assurance services for the evaluation. She reviewed the evaluation approach, design and approaches for data collection and analysis. The Senior Advisor’s review of the final report is included in Annex VIII. The CLE also benefitted from internal IOE peer review as well as from the comments of the external peer reviewer, Eric Bloom from Asian Development Bank.
35. **Deliverables.** The final report, with the management response, will be presented to the Executive Board in June 2024.

G. Limitations

36. **Data gaps in IFAD’s financial reporting systems.** To quantify the financial resources for KM, the CLE used grants review and project cost data (from OBI database). Data analysis showed that there are significant data gaps with regarding to how KM is budgeted and funded. Therefore, it was not possible to obtain reliable data on budgets for KM in loans, grants or supplementary funds. There are also gaps in the available data on human resources for KM. During a FGD with regional economists, the CLE team discussed the issue, but it was impossible to obtain accurate KM budget data.⁸ In addition to dedicated KM specialists in SKD and KM Focal Points at corporate and regional level, staff time used for knowledge creation, use, and dissemination is not budgeted, but it is part of the of the routine job descriptions within IFAD. To complement existing data gaps, the CLE team used

⁸ ESA made an attempt to obtain accurate budget data from ongoing projects but concluded that these were not consistent.

qualitative and quantitative information from surveys, focus group discussions and interviews.

37. **Thematic categorisations in OBI, SKD and COMS.** There is no agreed categorisation of thematic areas in IFAD (investment categories, mainstreaming issues), which would make it possible to track resources and activities across the organisation. Different classifications for thematic areas are used by COMs and SKD, and data therefore cannot be cross-referenced, e.g., investment areas, supplementary funds and knowledge products. Some divisions, such as PMI, have their own ways of tracking knowledge products and events, but these are not adopted more widely.
38. **Insufficient monitoring of KM activities.** For example, COMs does not collect the basic data to track knowledge sharing events. The classification of publications was incomplete; only a smaller portion of the publications was allocated to thematic areas. There is also a lack of systematic monitoring of KM practices, products and platforms which meant that the CLE had to develop procedures for this.
39. **Grant documentation.** IFAD does not have a central storage for grant documents (design, progress, completion report and other reports produced through grants). The CLE therefore had to retrieve grant documents, as available, from QAG, divisional x-desks and OBI. No documents were available on results achieved after grant closure. Finally, most of the IFAD staff involved with grants who was interviewed had been handed over their grant related tasks from previous colleagues and therefore could not have comprehensive information.
40. **CLE timeframe.** The timeframe for this CLE (2016-2023) has set limitations to the data that are presented in this report. Financial and HR data from 2016 until the end of 2022 were used for the analysis. Country case studies and regional division studies were conducted from December 2022 until June 2023, and they covered the KM activities and products available during this period. Data related to downloads of IFAD knowledge products refer to the period from January 2016 to December 2022. KM activities and publications have continued after the conclusion of the data analysis (July 2023) and not all of them may be reflected in this report.

II. Background to KM in IFAD and KM Lessons Learned

41. This Chapter provides the background to KM in IFAD by examining the evolution of KM strategies and the institutional arrangements for KM. It also reviews lessons on KM from IFAD's independent evaluations as well as lessons from other IFI's and UN organisations.

A. KM Strategies and Architecture

42. The evolution of KM strategies over the past 15 years is an indication of IFAD's ambition to position itself as a knowledge organisation within the global context. IFAD's first KM strategy was approved in 2007 to cover the years 2008-2010 (IFAD, 2007). At this time, IFAD adopted the ambition to be a '**learning organization**', arguing that 'IFAD will learn systematically and collectively from its own projects and programmes, and from the experience of its partners, particularly poor rural people, in order to deliver high quality services and to enable its partners to find innovative ways to overcome poverty, and to use the knowledge acquired to foster pro-poor policy reforms' (IFAD, 2007). Against the background of the adoption of KM strategies by other international organizations, the motivation for the new strategy was twofold: a rapidly changing global context which required new learning and approaches; and a recognition that **development effectiveness depended on new knowledge capabilities**.

Table 1
Timeline of key KM Milestones at IFAD

Year	Strategy/Document
2007	IFAD Strategy for Knowledge Management 2008 - 2010
2011	Progress report on the implementation of the IFAD Strategy for Knowledge Management and the innovation agenda
2011	IFAD Medium-term Plan 2011-2013: X. Knowledge management and policy dialogue outcomes 2011-2013
2014	IFAD Knowledge Management Framework 2014-2018
2015	Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD operations (ARRI_2015: Learning theme on knowledge management: How can operations learn to improve performance?
2016	IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025; Knowledge Management Action Plan 2016-2018
2019	Knowledge Management Strategy 2019-2025; Knowledge Management Action Plan 2019-2021
2019	Introduction of the Annual Report on Knowledge Management in the RIDE
2022	Mid-Term Review of Knowledge Management Strategy 2019-2025
2022	South-South and Triangular Cooperation Strategy for IFAD
2023	Knowledge Action Plan 2023-2025

Source: Evaluation team

43. Since 2007, IFAD has introduced additional KM strategies with associated action plans together with reviews and other reporting arrangements. These are indicated in Table 1. IFAD's current **Knowledge Management Strategy (2019-2025)** was approved by the Executive Board in May 2019 (IFAD, 2019). The strategy aims to guide IFAD towards better integrated and more effective KM that is tailored to the new decentralized organizational structure, enhanced business model and the development of effectiveness framework, and supports IFAD in achieving greater development impact. It presents knowledge as an integral part of IFAD's Strategic framework 2016-2025 and argues that successful implementation of the Strategy will support IFAD to achieve development impact.

44. The Strategy is being implemented through the two-phased Knowledge Management Action Plans, the first of which (2019-2021) was developed concurrently with the Strategy and subsequently executed. IFAD commissioned an internal **Mid-Term Review (MTR)** of IFAD's Knowledge Management Strategy (2019-2025), which was completed in September 2022. The main findings of the MTR were that i) knowledge is a key driver of development impact within IFAD with increased knowledge creation, access and use, and a growing learning culture within IFAD; and ii) parts of the Strategy have proven challenging to execute and monitor; it was over-ambitious since it was not supported by dedicated resources/staff time. Recommendations included: a refresh of the KM strategy; additional resources for KM activities; adoption of the concepts of 'thought leadership' and 'knowledge for impact'; and a condensed KM monitoring system. The recommendations from the MTR have led to a second Knowledge Action Plan to cover the second half of implementation of the strategy (2023-25), which has been submitted to IFAD Management for review.⁹
45. **Knowledge Management Architecture.** The 2019 KM Strategy lays out the basic structures for KM in the context of the ongoing decentralisation process. It envisages that the mandates of knowledge creation, use, and dissemination are undertaken throughout IFAD's corporate, regional and country-level architecture. The Programme Management Department (PMD) and its respective regional divisions (APR, ESA, NEN, LAC, WCA) act as the front-line implementers of IFAD's KM strategy by operationalizing KM at the project and programme levels, for example through regional KM strategies. As elaborated in the 2019 KM strategy, the Executive Management Committee is responsible for modelling and prioritizing KM overall at IFAD, while the KM team within the Strategy and Knowledge Department (SKD) explicitly leads the development of guidelines, tools and outreach support for implementing KM strategies and action plans. (See Table 1 in Annex III for further details).

B. Lessons from evaluations of knowledge management

46. **IOE's country strategy and programme evaluations** (CSPEs) rate KM performance by evaluating KM outcomes against the COSOP objectives.¹⁰ The trend in the performance of KM in country programmes shows little change since 2010. After rising in the early 2010s, there was a decline in KM performance until 2017, after which performance improved again. However, in 2021 KM performance was still lower than observed a decade ago. The 2016 ARRI¹¹ took stock of IFAD's experience with KM, recognising IFAD's progress in using knowledge resources more strategically, in incorporating lessons of past operations into present work, and in expanding knowledge-sharing inside the organization and with external partners at all levels. It also showed that KM activities at the country strategy and project levels were hampered by budget constraints and a lack of incentives and human resources.
47. The 2022 **Annual Report on the Independent Evaluation of IFAD** (ARIE) noted that among the non-lending activities, which also include partnership building and policy engagement, KM has received the lowest share of ratings within the satisfactory range.¹² The 2022 ARIE provided lessons learned from recent CSPEs on KM. Positive cases shared common factors, such as country strategies (COSOPs) that were explicit in how to operationalize KM processes; operational partnerships for KM with other development partners; earmarked financial resources, such as grants; and government leadership in capturing and using knowledge. The review also noted

⁹ The latest version of the Action Plan discussed by the EMC (July 2023) does not specify the budget implications.

¹⁰ IOE assesses KM in each Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation (CSPE) including through a rating on a scale of 1 to 6, specifically "The extent to which the IFAD-funded country programme is capturing, creating, distilling, sharing and using knowledge" No further guidance or rubric is provided.

¹¹ 2016 Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI)

https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714182/39709860/ARRI_2016_full.pdf/569bcea7-a84a-4d38-867f-89b3bb98e0e4

¹² See Annex VI.

weak project M&E systems, a confusion of KM with communication, and insufficient human and financial resources as hindering factors.

48. The CLE reviewed eleven **recent KM evaluations undertaken by IFIs and United Nations** entities.¹³ A number of international organisations with business models similar to that of IFAD have completed evaluations of KM in the past three years. The focus of these evaluations is on corporate KM systems, and they do not generally reach down to the country level. In addition, they do not focus on KM practices. Despite these differences in focus, the evaluative evidence available allowed the CLE to identify lessons that could inform IFAD's approach to KM.
49. The evaluations reveal a set of the 10 most common lessons learned about KM. These are listed in Box 1.¹⁴

Box 1

Top ten lessons from recent IFI and UN evaluations on KM

Leadership and organizational culture

Leadership commitment and culture are critical to embed knowledge management. Without top management support and an open, collaborative culture, knowledge management will struggle.

- Having clear governance mechanisms, frameworks and strategies helps provide coherence and direction to knowledge management.
- Breaking down organizational silos and boundaries is key to improve knowledge flows. Rigid structures prevent effective collaboration and sharing.
- Knowledge management must be integrated into core business processes, not an add-on. This requires mainstreaming it into operations.

Staff responsibilities and incentives

- Knowledge management requires dedicated roles, resources and units for consistency and effectiveness. Relying on ad hoc efforts risks fragmentation.
- Incentives and staff performance systems should align with and reinforce desired knowledge behaviours. Rewards and recognition matter.
- Systematically capturing tacit knowledge from staff and consultants is vital so that expertise does not get lost.

Capacities and knowledge use

- Investing in user needs assessments, dissemination, monitoring and evaluation is key to maximize the impact of knowledge products and services.
- Leveraging external partnerships and networks with stakeholders like academia enhances knowledge management capabilities.
- Awareness raising and capacity building enables staff to fully utilize knowledge management systems and integrate knowledge into their work.

Source: CLE Analysis

¹³ Corporate-level evaluations of KM from ADB (2020), EBRD (2021), GEF (2020), IDB (2019), WB (2019), JIU (2016, 2018), ILO (2020), IOM (2018), UNESCO (2023) and UN Women (2019). See Annex IV for further details.

¹⁴ The recent MDLP publication Return on Knowledge (2022) offers further lessons on KM obtained through case studies from international organisations, including IFAD.

III. The relevance and coherence of IFAD's strategies and institutional framework for KM

Evaluation question 1: How relevant and coherent is IFAD's institutional framework for knowledge management given the mandate and needs of the organization and within the global, regional, and local context in which IFAD works.

50. This chapter looks at the relevance of IFAD's KM strategies and architecture at corporate, regional and country levels. It tests the hypothesis that the knowledge produced by IFAD is relevant to its mandate¹⁵ and the needs of the organization, both in terms of the Strategic Framework 2016-2025 and at regional and country levels. It also verifies the internal and external coherence of IFAD's KM strategy, assessing the institutional arrangements for the KM including the integration of SSTC. Finally, it reviews the hypothesis that IFAD is engaging in KM partnerships as is well positioned as knowledge provider (see Annex VIII).

A. Relevance of the 2019 KM Strategy and Action Plan

51. **The 2019 KM Strategy was well aligned with IFAD's strategic framework and ongoing decentralisation process.** In broad terms, the 2019 KM strategy responded to the aspirations of the Strategic Framework (SF) 2016-2025, which emphasise KM as a key part of its agenda to contribute to rural transformation. The SF states that "IFAD's development impact will depend on the quality of its programme of work and its success in leveraging financial resources and knowledge in, through and beyond the programmes it supports. This will constitute IFAD's scaling-up agenda." The 2019 KM strategy aimed to guide IFAD towards better integrated and more effective KM that is tailored to the new decentralized organizational structure, enhanced business model and its effectiveness framework. IFAD's 2019 KM strategy represented contemporary good practices. For example, the 2016 UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) inspection of knowledge management in the UN¹⁶ saw IFAD as one of the 'pioneers' of knowledge management in the UN. IFAD has also received awards for its consistent strategic orientation in KM and the people-centred, highly consultative process of developing the strategy.¹⁷
52. **The CLE found that the main assumptions underpinning the 2019 KM strategy did not hold.** The Theory of Change in the 2019 KM Strategy includes the assumptions for the intended KM outputs, outcomes and impact. The ambition of the ToC was high, claiming that IFAD would assemble and transform knowledge into better development results and impact towards the 2030 Agenda. Notwithstanding the absence of corporate data to monitor the output and outcome-level indicators in the TOC (see Chapter IV), the CLE findings did not confirm the underlying assumptions. Resources for KM were not adequate and there were insufficient incentives for staff at decentralised level (see Chapter VI on efficiency). Synergies within the IFAD knowledge system were not sufficient to create a learning culture with a positive impact on IFAD's development outcomes (see Chapter III.C. on coherence).
53. **Neglect of indigenous and local knowledge was a gap in the 2019 KM strategy.** The 2019 KM strategy says little about indigenous and local knowledge

¹⁵ IFAD's mandate as set out in the SF is investing in rural people and enabling inclusive and sustainable transformation of rural areas, notably through smallholder agriculture-led growth.

¹⁶ UN JIU (2016) Knowledge Management in the UN system. p. 3
https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_document_files/products/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2016_10_English.pdf

¹⁷ IFAD received an award for Advancing Knowledge & Organizational Learning Practice from the Henley Forum for Organizational Learning and Knowledge Strategies during its 20th annual conference on 5-6 February 2020. In September 2018, IFAD received the International Award from Knowledge Management Austria at the Knowledge for Development Partnership conference at the WTO.

even though the SF and relevant policies have emphasised the importance of engagement with indigenous peoples. The 2009 Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples highlights that Indigenous Peoples' knowledge provides possible judicious and equitable pathways for development in many developing countries. The Strategic Framework 2016-2025 notes that IFAD will also continue to focus on vulnerable and marginalized rural groups including Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, 2022 update to the Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples reaffirms IFAD's commitment to support Indigenous Peoples self-driven development, while respecting and enhancing their traditional livelihoods, occupations and knowledge. The accessible knowledge products had not yet gained prominence at the time of the design KM strategy, as IFAD adopted its disability inclusion strategy in 2022, but would need to be considered in any future KM policies or strategies.

54. **The intentions of the 2019 KM strategy were not fully operationalised; the accompanying action plan resulted in a focus on SKD rather than organization wide.** Attached to the KM Strategy was the Knowledge Management Action Plan 2019-2021, which further defined the activities for that period over three broad action areas: (i) knowledge generation according to investment priorities and demand for knowledge services; (ii) knowledge use, which includes building capacities in the decentralised context; and (iii) the enabling environment, including stronger incentives for staff to generate, share and use knowledge. These areas formed the basis of the Action Plan and together built the structure of the plan's results framework, with a series of outputs and outcomes delineated. A limitation of the 2019 KM Action Plan was its strong focus on SKD, with less emphasis on the KM-related roles of other departments and units (see Chapter III.C. on internal coherence). Of the 35 activities listed in the Action Plan, SKD took the lead role in two-thirds.
55. The 2022 MTR of the 2019 KM Action Plan, commissioned and managed by SKD also focused on the corporate role of SKD.¹⁸ An After Action Review of the MTR, conducted by this CLE, found that the review had helped to identify key bottlenecks for KM in the organisation, for example, that knowledge was still fragmented across various systems and platforms, making products and knowledge resources challenging for staff to find; that many KM activities were developed in silos; project knowledge had not been leveraged to its fullest potential; and that monitoring of KM was focused more on knowledge product generation than on knowledge use.
56. **The 2019 KM strategy does not provide clear roles for and responsibilities at the regional level.** The intention of the 2019 KM Strategy was to align with the ongoing process of decentralisation, enhancing the role of the regional hubs.¹⁹ The strategy does not provide a clear and centralized definition of roles in corporate KM. In the absence of clear actionable guidance from the corporate KM Strategy, regional divisions have developed their approaches to KM, responding with what seemed suited to the specific contexts and in line with their decentralisation status. For example, APR tried to align its KM action plans with the corporate KM Strategy and contextualize corporate KM within the region. NEN is reportedly drafting a KM strategy that will align with the corporate KM Strategy. The LAC KM and SSTC strategy for 2020-2021 took a different approach compared to the IFAD corporate KM Strategy, focusing more on engagements at different levels and integrating KM into country programmes. The LAC strategy also reflected on the relevance of KM and SSTC to respond to diverse demands of Middle-Income Countries (MICs). ESA recently developed some frameworks including a KM Action Plan for 2022-2025 and country-specific plans. In WCA, the

¹⁸ Because of resource constraints, the MTR did not assess implementation at country level or review the strategic role of KM in IFAD and in rural transformation. Besides, the MTR was not meant to assess a) outcomes in countries; b) demand and uptake from clients; or c) partnerships.

¹⁹ The regional hubs later became the multi-country offices (MCOs).

Dakar Hub championed a project-centric approach with KM action plans from 2018-2020 but this was discontinued, due to turnover of staff in the hub. The multitude of approaches developed on the ground contributed to the overall fragmentation of KM in IFAD.

57. Prior to the 2019 strategy, there were initiatives within regional divisions to link the various tiers into a comprehensive approach. The NEN KM Strategy and Workplan (2016-2018) took a cohesive, three-tiered approach to KM with clear objectives at country, regional, and corporate levels. It identified specific roles and entry points into the KM architecture for different divisions and staff. Moreover, it linked KM to other key business processes like SSTC and scaling up and recognized the need to fill gaps through technical support from other divisions. It included a results measurement framework to track progress and outcomes and considered resourcing KM through various means like administrative budgets, grants and loans. The NEN strategy showed a thorough, integrated approach to strategic planning for KM across levels of the organization. As such, it provided a good case of comprehensive regional and country-level KM frameworks.
58. **Insufficient leadership and guidance led to weak KM approaches that were often driven by immediate needs in countries.** The country case studies consistently reported on the weak linkages between sub-regional, regional, country, and project levels. While in some countries (e.g., Vietnam, Argentina) demonstrated practices for sub-regional knowledge sharing, these were linked into broader regional and corporate KM frameworks. In some cases, it was the insufficient integration of regional and global grants into the country programme that contributed to incoherent KM approaches, as seen in Egypt, Argentina, and Côte d'Ivoire. But more often it was the absence of support from IFAD HQ and regional offices, in the form of training, guidance and frameworks. Support was notably missing in some countries, such as Angola and China, but also noted for regional hubs (e.g., Istanbul). Insufficient clarity on KM meant that the line between KM and communication practices was blurred, with a focus on dissemination rather than holistic knowledge processes.²⁰ The absence of full-time KM professionals and clear strategies at the country level was another gap, noted for example in Madagascar, Egypt, and Côte d'Ivoire, which also prevented effective monitoring of KM activities. In some cases, there was a good understanding of KM in country offices (e.g., Kenya), but the capacities were insufficient to guide KM in projects.
59. **Recent KM initiatives indicate a relevant shift towards focus on improving data quality and availability for knowledge-based country level policy support.** IFAD's data governance policy, approved in 2022, aims to improve IFAD's generation and use of data across all its areas of work. The policy is led by SKD with the involvement of several other divisions including ICT and OHR. A separate, but related initiative, is IFAD's Omnidata project, led by the ICT division, launched in 2022 which links IFAD's establishes an interface and analytical tools for IFAD staff to access all of IFAD's databases from a single source.

B. Relevance of IFAD's knowledge

60. This section reviews the relevance of knowledge produced by IFAD for stakeholders and partners in support of rural transformation. There is a growing recognition, also within IFAD, that rural transformation - as a wicked problem in contexts of complexity - requires many different types of knowledges. These so-called 'multiple knowledges' underline the need for new ways of assessing the quality of knowledge, potentially by placing a greater emphasis on relevance and on the knowledge of key stakeholders, such as rural people. Such an approach does not undermine the value - and quality - of scientific knowledge but rather stresses the need for its combination with other knowledges, such as technical, local, indigenous and

²⁰ The ARRI 2022 review of CSPE findings on KM also noted the confusion between KM and communication.

community knowledge. The CLE therefore reviewed the prevalence of these knowledges in IFAD's knowledge products and the extent to which these address the needs of different stakeholder groups.

Relevance at country level

61. **Stakeholders at country level have different needs for knowledge.** Responses from the most recent IFAD stakeholder survey²¹ indicated that IFAD's knowledge products have been broadly relevant to respondents' work and useful in informing policy or programme decisions. There was a strong consensus among respondents across regions that knowledge-intensive services provided by IFAD, encompassing technical assistance, capacity building, advice and support to policy and programme development, and SSTC, were of significant relevance, as reflected by a high average score of 3.50 out of 4 for the related questions. The relevance of IFAD's knowledge products, such as data, analysis, studies and workshops, received a slightly lower average score. Case studies indicate that IFAD's corporate knowledge products could be improved through greater policy focus, analytical rigor, translation, dissemination and contextualization. Knowledge products grounded in country-specific experiences from projects, such as project completion reports and project supervision mission reports, were often valued more than IFAD's corporate knowledge products. Also, the Organisational Network Analysis conducted for the MTR found that while HQ-based staff want more knowledge events and repositories, country-based staff prefer interactions and helpdesks, such as ECG's project-focused help desk on gender and nutrition or the grant-funded disability helpdesk.
62. **IFAD's corporate knowledge products are not generally used at the country level because they are not tailored or specific enough to cater to local needs.**²² Stakeholder feedback obtained during country case studies indicated that corporate knowledge products tend to be lengthy, academic, technical, and less operational. Moreover, while the CLE found few instances of external actors using IFAD's knowledge products,²³ there seems to be a systemic constraint preventing their wider dissemination and application outside IFAD. Furthermore, PMI's review of knowledge products (2022) found that the identification of topics for knowledge products tends to be generally supply-driven. PMI knowledge products are not explicit about target audiences and the review found that out of 57 knowledge products reviewed, 44 did not explicitly indicate the targeted audience. For instance, in countries like Nigeria, there's a challenge in making these resources accessible to a varied audience. Insufficient capture of on-the-ground expertise from projects was highlighted as another barrier to sharing knowledge externally in some contexts.²⁴
63. **Country programmes rely on corporate knowledge products covering relevant themes, in particular mainstreaming themes.** Knowledge products produced at country level did not consistently address cross-cutting issues like gender, environment and youth. This is due to a lack of incentives and overreliance on individual interests in handling cross-cutting knowledge in the country teams. In many countries, cross-cutting issues do not feature prominently in the COSOPs or project design, so there is less incentive to generate related

²¹ IFAD stakeholder survey 31 May 2023. See more information in Annex VI

²² Stakeholder surveys suggest a notably lower consensus on the relevance of IFAD's knowledge products in equipping countries to reduce rural poverty and food insecurity, especially when compared to IFAD's financial aids and services (see figure 8 in Annex VI).

²³ For example, in Mexico, FAO reportedly learned from IFAD for a new project, and Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) held weekly meetings with an IFAD consultant to follow their territorial management model. IFAD knowledge was seen as valuable by CEPAL across themes like small farming. In Argentina, Inter American Development Bank (IADB) expressed interest in deploying IFAD's Relative Rurality Index, and Plata Basin Financial Development Fund (FONPLATA) learned from IFAD interventions via Twitter.

²⁴ An SKD analysis of the Research Series shows that while the majority of studies are concerned with Africa, downloads are concentrated in a few Anglophone African countries, namely Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya and Malawi (Analysis by F. Benedetti and G. Chiaventi).

knowledge products. Only a handful of countries have produced knowledge resources that touch on these cross-cutting themes (for instance, gender in Kyrgyzstan, environment in Peru, and rural youth in Nigeria and Brazil). While countries like Kenya and Argentina have granted slightly more attention to themes like gender or nutrition, their overall presence remains limited.

Relevance at corporate level

64. **Publication of research and technical knowledge is under the responsibility of SKD.** The IFAD knowledge webpage lists the following series of knowledge products: *Advantage Series, Impact Assessment, Research Series, Results from the Field, and Toolkits*.²⁵ Other knowledge products include the *IFAD Annual Report* and the *IFAD Rural Development Report*. The largest series is the research series with 87 publications since 2016. The most viewed IFAD products from series are Rural Development Report, followed by Annual Report, Advantage series, Impact assessment, Toolkit, Results from the Field (discontinued) and Research Series (also see Chapter VI for cost effectiveness of knowledge products).
65. The IFAD Rural Development Report (RDR) is a flagship publication that analyses rural development issues and provides policy recommendations to promote sustainable and equitable development in rural areas. The RDRs is based on research and uses data from a variety of sources, including IFAD's own operations, national and international surveys, and academic research. The most recent RDR – Transforming food systems for rural prosperity - was released in 2021 to coincide with the United Nations Food Systems Summit. Previous RDRs were released in 2016 and 2019. The 2021 RDR was widely distributed and led to a series of debates with external partners on its contents. While the report could not influence the design of the IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025, the report was a source of data and analysis for the IFAD13 replenishment process.
66. Knowledge products published on IFAD's website cover relevant themes, in particular mainstreaming themes. Analysis by theme on knowledge products indicates that Climate and Environment stands out as the most widely represented topic, with 116 publications referring to it, followed by Rural Finance (73) and Nutrition (62). Also, all the other IFAD mainstreaming themes feature prominently in the dataset, specifically: Gender (49), Indigenous peoples (39) and Youth (35). Institutions and Organisations (12), and Fisheries (8) appear to be the least present themes in IFAD publications. This is particularly true for the theme *Access to Markets*, where the analysis highlights a critical undersupply of knowledge products compared to the high share of IFAD financing going to that theme.
67. Technical knowledge constitutes the largest share of knowledge products. The share technical knowledge products targeting operations, such as tools and guidelines, how to notes and lessons learned, has been decreasing since 2016. For example, there is no technical guidance for operations to support integrated approaches climate change adaptation, an area that has become an area of focus for IFAD and has attracted significant supplementary funding (see Annex V, Figure 12).²⁶ Other areas, such as rural finance, value chains, gender and nutrition are better covered by operational guidance. Experiential knowledge and policy knowledge, produced by country programmes, constitutes a small share of knowledge products (9 per cent) (see figures 14-19 in Annex V).
68. The majority of publication is now research and reports. Within the SKD, the Research and Impact Assessment Division (RIA) produces research, data, knowledge and evidence. As part of IFAD's self-evaluation, RIA conducts Impact

²⁵ IFAD SKD Knowledge website. <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/publications>

²⁶ The IOE Evaluation on IFAD's support for Smallholder Farmers' Adaptation to Climate Change(2023) noted that IFAD does not offer substantive guidance in shaping CCA responses that restore degraded natural systems. There is no guidance, such as How To Do Notes were available to identify and design winwin solutions and to develop more integrated approaches (p. 74),

Assessments (IAs) on a sample of at least 15 per cent of projects closing during each replenishment period.²⁷ Over time, RIA has expanded its scope of work to other knowledge products contributing to knowledge production as a global public good. The IFAD 11 microsite is the main tool used to host the expanded data and knowledge. It hosts all the datasets used for the RIA IAs, which are available publicly.

69. **IFAD knowledge products are available in few languages only, limiting their utility.** The majority of IFAD's full-text publications are published in English, with a smaller selection in Spanish and French, and a minimal amount in Arabic. For instance, by the end of 2022, of the 682 knowledge products available on the IFAD website with download links, 99 per cent are in English. Only a small number of them also have versions in other languages: 13 per cent in Spanish, 16 per cent in French, and 5 per cent in Arabic. Knowledge products published in multiple languages are mainly research, report and how-to-notes.
70. **Corporate knowledge products are not adequately capturing experiential and local knowledges.** Following the guidance from SKD, several divisions have prepared Knowledge Gap maps, notably WCA, LAC, and NEN. The KGMs have served primarily IFAD's internal purpose, to inform IFAD's research agenda. The mapping exercise collected relevant technical insights in order to remedy knowledge gaps in IFAD's investment areas. With their focus on single investment areas, the KGMs do not provide the systems-level knowledge required for rural transformation. Furthermore, their present focus only on IFAD knowledge products and the narrower view of "credible evidence" excludes non-traditional sources, such as local and indigenous knowledge, areas critical for transformative rural development.
71. Experience capitalisation was a relevant initiative to document knowledge from operations. Experience capitalisation is a facilitated, participatory process to analyse lessons from experience and use them to improve development interventions. The collaboration on this between SKD and the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation resulted in five case study reports produced in ESA, WCA and APR. Facilitators based in the South assisted the programmes to analyse and document experiences from implementation. Though it took place in 2018, the initiative has not been repeated since.
72. **The potential of knowledge from the Global South to drive rural transformation is not being fully leveraged by IFAD.** Knowledge from the Global South can play a crucial role in supporting rural transformation. Yet, the knowledge via IFAD's SSTC channels has fallen short in both capturing the rich insights from the Global South and aligning them with IFAD's role in supporting rural transformation. The Rural Solutions Portal (RSP), monitored by a partnership analysis in the GPR, is the main institutional platform to share knowledge under China-IFAD SSTC facility.²⁸ Partners would provide a short write-up of their solutions; in some cases, they presented their details without revealing details of the "solution".
73. This platform showcases replicable solutions to common challenges in rural development, offering an easily navigable repository of innovations. However, its limited scope together with the current emphasis on standalone innovations and technology means it does not fully represent the transformative knowledge of the South. As of November 2023, the RSP has mostly shared solutions related to crops (53), farmers' organizations (43), market access (35), and climate and

²⁷ IFAD is the only international financial institution that systematically attempts to measure the impact of its investments this way.

²⁸ The Rural Solutions Portal shows over 100 solutions last year developed in partnership with institutions such as AGRA, IBRAF, and USAID. The top five countries of traffic include India, Rwanda, the US, Kenya, and China. Google analytics show more than 20 daily visits over the past year, in total, more than 25,000 visits (May 2023). <https://ruralsolutionsportal.org/en/-/39585602-46>

environmental strategies (33). Cross-cutting themes such as gender, youth, nutrition, and indigenous peoples form only a small fraction of the solutions, and solutions related to inclusion of people with disabilities are absent.

74. IFAD's SSTC Approach (2016)²⁹ recognised the limited availability of resources in IFAD and proposed use of global partnerships, in particular with FAO and WFP, to leverage knowledge and technical collaborations. More specifically, the paper suggested collaboration with FAO's South-South cooperation gateway³⁰ and WFP's centres of excellence. These proposals were not followed up and the RSP did not achieve the visibility of SSTC initiatives of the WFP and FAO. This seems like a missed opportunity to scale up knowledge sharing through SSTC. For example, WFP's three Centres of Excellence one in China was greatly appreciated by the national governments and stakeholders met during the China case study.

C. Coherence of KM strategies, architecture and practices

75. This section reviews how KM roles are institutionalised and linked within IFAD. KM requires diverse roles in order to contribute to rural transformation. The section assesses whether the divisions with a knowledge function are sufficiently linked within a coherent system for decision making and innovation in IFAD. It also reviews IFAD's engagement in partnerships to advance KM within the wider development community. Recognizing the connections between IFAD's internal knowledge and external knowledge is important because IFAD and its stakeholders are also part of the wider knowledge ecosystem.

Coherence of institutional arrangements for KM

76. **Simultaneous creation of several units with a mandate on KM in 2019 has laid the foundation for incoherence within the KM system.** In 2019, IFAD adopted the KM Strategy and created a new KM team within SKD to coordinate the implementation of the KM Action Plan. In the same year, IFAD established a Change, Delivery and Innovation (CDI) unit, with a broad mandate to promote innovative solutions in IFAD's processes and operations. Also in 2019, IFAD established SSTC and Knowledge Centres in Beijing, Addis Ababa and Brasilia, and placed the responsibility for SSTC in the newly created Global Engagement, Partnership and Resource Mobilization Division.³¹ Divisions such as COM and ICT, while having a role in KM, were only marginally involved in the strategy development and implementation. These decisions have caused some inconsistencies and duplication within the KM architecture.
77. **CDI's position under the Office of the President is an advantage as it enhances its ability to engage across the organization, and its nimble and focused structure makes it more agile.** The CDI team is placed strategically under the Office of the President. It consists of two full time staff supported by a few short-term personnel. While CDI performs a KM function - identifying, promoting and disseminating good practices on the topic of innovation - it sits outside of IFAD's KM architecture. CDI is part of the KMCG and collaborates with SKD on specific initiatives such as its learning events but is separate in terms of work planning and budget. CDI is also active in building external partnerships in the innovation sector. For instance, it participates in the innovation working group of the IFIs and in the UN-wide behavioural science coordination group.
78. **SSTC is not well integrated into the regional KM architecture.** IFAD's 2016 SSTC Approach³² involved KM practices such as knowledge exchanges, learning routes and regional learning centres, under the pillar of "Improved knowledge and/or skills". The PMD was primarily responsible for conceiving, designing,

²⁹ Board document (EB 2016/119/R.6)

³⁰ <https://www.fao.org/south-south-gateway/database/en/>

³¹ GPR was a Division merged by GKS (Global Engagement, Knowledge and Strategy) and PRM (Partnership and Resources Mobilization Division). SSTC used to be under the management of GKS.

³² Board document (EB 2016/119/R.6)

supervising, and supporting SSTC activities at regional, country, and project levels. An Interdepartmental Working Group on SSTC (IWGS) was established in 2017, to improve corporate-wide knowledge sharing and coordination of SSTC activities but meetings were infrequent and governance mechanism were unclear.³³ Regional SSTC and Knowledge centres were established in 2019, but their role was not well defined. In 2022 IFAD adopted the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Strategy (2022-2027). The strategy aimed to (i) systematically identifying and disseminating knowledge and innovation at the country programme and project level; and (ii) supporting policy engagement to increase the productive capacity, market access and resilience of rural people. In 2022, IFAD reported progress on SSTC (EB-2022-137-R-29) which recognised the need for greater synergy between KM and SSTC. Clarification of the roles of the SSTC and Knowledge centres and improved coordination with the knowledge teams, as demanded by the report, are pending.³⁴

79. **The role of the SSTC and knowledge centres vis-à-vis the establishment of new regional offices still requires clarification.** According to the 2021 IFAD SSTC Strategy, the three SSTC and Knowledge Centres were expected to be harmonized within IFAD's new Decentralization 2.0 structure. It was envisioned that IFAD's new regional offices would assume a coordination and leadership responsibility for the implementation of SSTC activities on the ground, building on the existing knowledge and expertise of the SSTC and knowledge centres. In line with efforts to increase the share of decentralized staff, the regional offices were expected to include staff from various departments.
80. **While the centres are formally headed by the country directors where they are located, staff reports to GPR.** There are therefore multiple divisions to respond to, and resources are scant.³⁵ In LAC, the centre is based in Brasilia and run by one dedicated staff member from GPR (under the External Relations and Governance Department (ERG) division). The head of the SSTC and Knowledge Centre is the Brazil CD. The GPR staff member is housed in a PMD office in Brasilia and maintains the KM function, which is overseen by SKD. The Beijing SSTC and Knowledge Centre is fully absorbed by the SSTC facility and has not played a role in regional or country-level KM. In ESA, the Ethiopia SSTC and Knowledge Centre in Addis Ababa never functioned. Corporate direction for how this centre ought to function or be funded have effectively been subsumed by the GPR division since the Addis centre does not have senior staff that could effectively perform the function employed there. This gap is even more significant considering that the Addis centre is also supposed to covered WCA and the North Africa part of NEN.

Box 2

Challenges for SSTC and KM in Middle Income Countries

³³ According to the 2019 of Self-Assessment of IFAD's SSTC, conducted by the GPR. The Self-Assessment also recommended a shift towards operational SSTC trade and investment partnerships.

³⁴ See IOE CSPE China (2023).

³⁵ According to the Brazil CD, there is a budget of US\$10,000 from GPR. Otherwise, activities have to be funded through savings made in the Brazil country office.

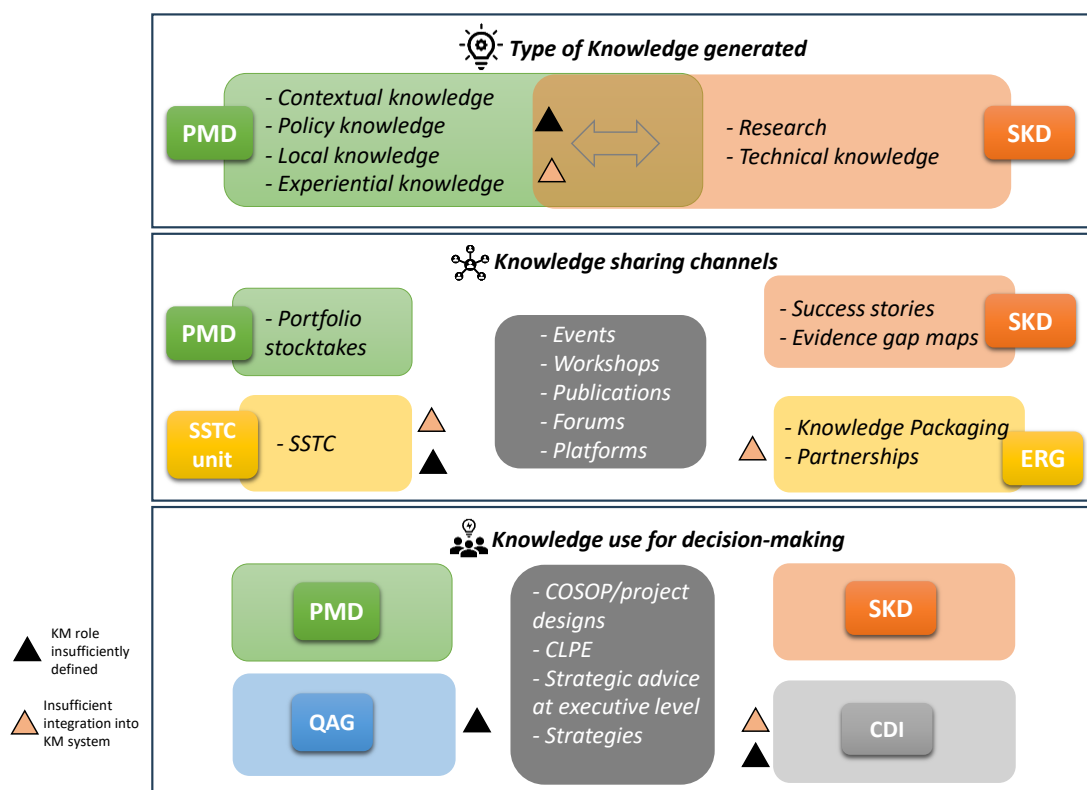
Focus group discussions with IFAD staff working in LAC countries reveal significant challenges in IFAD's capacity to implement SSTC and KM in Upper Middle-Income Countries (UMICs). The leadership of SSTC across various departments, combined with a lack of dedicated resources for KM, suggests a disjointed approach. Through progress has been made through the creation of the SSTC and Knowledge Center in Brazil, high staff turnover, a disconnect between field teams and headquarters, and the deferral of KM and SSTC to the latter stages of projects further underscore the challenges. The in-country presence is already overstretched and the ongoing engagement with regional networks, such as SICA and MERCOSUR, is demanding. While there is recognition of the value of SSTC in graduating countries, the discussions highlight a need for clearer guidelines, strategic prioritization, and resource allocation. The emphasis on differentiating communication from KM, the call for private sector engagement, and the desire for better integration between field teams and HQ all point to areas for improvement. There is a pressing need for a more coherent, resource-backed, and integrated approach to effectively implement SSTC and KM in UMICs.

Source: FGD on SSTC in LAC UMICs

81. **IFAD's knowledge system requires the interplay of complementary roles and functions that are housed in various departments.** The complementary roles required by a functioning KM system were not adequately covered by the 2019 KM Strategy and Action Plan, which overly focused on the coordinating role of one division, namely SKD. Some of the KM functions are not clearly defined and insufficiently linked (see figure 3). In addition to SKD, PMD, and QAG produce relevant knowledge, although the types of knowledge differ. SKD has a specific advantage producing scientific and technical knowledge. PMD due to its proximity to country stakeholders are better positioned to produce contextualised and operational knowledge. Chapter III. B. noted the current imbalances in the production of knowledge that is not always addressing stakeholder demands.
82. Several divisions are engaged in knowledge sharing, targeting different audiences. PMD, PMI, ECG and QAG are the main users of knowledge for strategy, planning and decision making. CDI and QAG are strategically positioned at executive level. QAG can draw from the available knowledge base to influence the design of operations and strategies. Knowledge production also requires technical support from the Communications Division (COM) and the Information and Communication Technology Division (ICT), although these have been less integrated into the KM system. Publication series and KM platforms would have been better aligned if there was a coherent and well-coordinated KM system.

Figure 3

Schematic overview of IFAD's KM system



Source: CLE mapping (See detailed information in Table 1 in Annex III)

83. COM is responsible for publishing knowledge products and increasing the visibility of operations. In order to streamline IFAD knowledge production and help to ensure consistent quality and appearance, COM, in collaboration with the KMCG, has developed templates for the main types of knowledge products. During CLE interviews COMS reported that one of its main hurdles is in obtaining primary knowledge on IFAD operations, resulting in heavy demands on country staff to provide information. The country studies noted a lack of clarity regarding the type and availability of support from COM outside of basic edits and formatting.
84. ICT joined the KMCG only in 2023. The division reports an increasing involvement in KM-related discussions in recent months, reflecting a realization within IFAD that it has a key role to play in KM. ICT provides the infrastructure to store and share information and data, on which KM builds which has been highlighted as a significant challenge by IFAD staff, given that the current proliferation of databases and platforms does not facilitate access to information. Some platforms, such as ORMS and Xdesk, have a corporate database function, while others, such as microsities and Power BI dashboards are divisional initiatives. The multiplication of platforms poses a challenge for the maintenance of the KM infrastructure.

KM partnerships

85. **Bilateral partnerships are key for IFAD to access and share knowledge at global, regional and country levels.** The 2023 MOPAN Assessment of IFAD³⁶ recognized IFAD's steps to increase external partnerships on KM, collaborating with institutions like the World Bank, but also saw opportunities to further develop systems and capacities to leverage external knowledge and best practices, to complement its current internal focus. In a similar vein, the IFAD stakeholder survey (formerly IFAD client survey) highlighted a need for improvement in IFAD's coordination with other aid agencies and in continually assessing and adjusting its

³⁶ This is the fourth assessment of IFAD conducted by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) with earlier assessments completed in 2010, 2013, and 2017-2018. This assessment covers the period from 2018 through 2022.

programmes. This suggests that, while the knowledge products are valued, there is a need for improved coherence in practice, especially in coordination efforts.³⁷

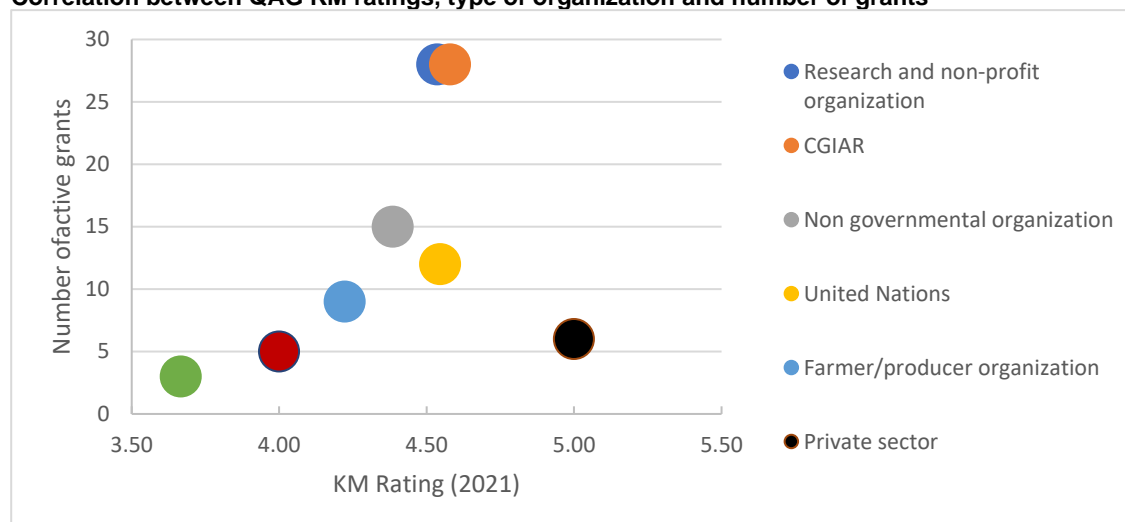
86. **GPR has a role supporting knowledge partnerships globally.** Currently IFAD has 179 active partnership agreements.³⁸ Out of these, 64 agreements (36 per cent) mention activities related to KM, such as knowledge production, sharing, strengthening of KM and technical cooperation. Research organizations and regional organizations were the type of organizations with the highest presence of KM in the agreements, as respectively 64 per cent and 60 per cent of agreements with such organizations included KM activities. The most frequently mentioned activities were knowledge sharing, (in 35 agreements) and knowledge production (in 15 agreements). Due to the lack of monitoring and follow up on these partnership agreements, there is no compiled data as to what actual activities or results have stemmed from them. Given the substantial presence of knowledge-related activities, this absence of monitoring and drawing of lessons negatively impacts on IFAD's ability to strategically reflect on its knowledge partnerships and inform its partnership efforts. This is particularly the case for its major knowledge partners such as research and CGIAR organizations.
87. **Despite producing relevant materials, knowledge management around grants remains weak, as responsibilities for management of grants are spread throughout the organisation.** IFAD does not have a corporate system for storage of grant, unlike IFAD projects (loans). Evidence of results beyond the immediate outputs of the grants is limited, as reporting on grant ends with the end of grant financing and there is no follow up by IFAD on subsequent results. As per the 2021 grant policy, IFAD's Quality Assurance Group (QAG) has established a corporate centralized monitoring of grants. Grant-financed partnerships have enabled knowledge production and knowledge management initiatives, which would not have been possible solely within IFAD's loan portfolio. For instance, grants to research organizations focused on supporting agricultural research which in some cases were directly used in IFAD projects but more often supported the broader knowledge ecosystem. In LAC, CEPAL and IFAD have built a strong knowledge partnership through the New Ruralities grant.³⁹ QAG ratings of KM in IFAD's regular grants portfolio indicates that the best performing organizations were from the private sector, United Nations, CGIAR and research organizations (see figure 4).

Figure 4

³⁷ IFAD client survey

³⁸ IFAD's partnership database on IFAD's Operations Manual, accessed in July 2023

³⁹ The New Ruralities Grant funded a study that aimed to identify different transformations in rural areas to formulate new development policies, evaluate the impact of a heterogeneous and dynamic definition of rurality on public development policies and the assigning of public funds to territories, and encourage a regional and national debate on public strategies on rural development. The study was conducted in Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Panama, and resulted in the development of a Relative Rurality Index.

Correlation between QAG KM ratings, type of organization and number of grants

Source: CLE analysis QAG Grants Status Reports and OBI

88. **IFAD is not taking full advantage of networks where contemporary KM concepts are discussed.** In 2020, IFAD joined the Multi-Donor Partnership on Learning for Development Impact (MDLP)⁴⁰ which was set up by multilateral and bilateral development agencies⁴¹ to raise the priority of their knowledge and organizational learning agendas, to intensify efforts to share learning with each other and to deliberately learn together, and to champion knowledge and learning investments across the international development sector. Members of the MDLP, such as Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit - German Development Cooperation (GIZ) and US Agency for International Development (USAID), have taken advantage of these new insights in the development of policies on local knowledge⁴² and discussions on decolonization while IFAD has not.⁴³ For instance, current discussions within the KM and KM4D disciplines are focusing on the potential of AI for knowledge work and knowledge management. While IFAD is looking into the potential uses of AI in its work, this has remained disjointed from its broader knowledge management efforts. The Athena Project looked at opportunities to strengthen KM through the use of AI for knowledge generation.⁴⁴ The project ended in 2021. Currently the work on AI is followed through ICT4D and Omnidata.
89. A relevant area is the **50x2030 initiative** established in 2019 in partnership with FAO and the World Bank, to promote the use of data and evidence in policy making processes at country level. This is funded with supplementary funds and focuses on producing demand-driven knowledge products for national policy makers. For instance, knowledge products were produced in Georgia and Uganda as inputs to policy formulation by the ministries of agriculture. Lessons from the implementation indicates the existence of strong capacities and willingness in countries to make use of data and evidence, but a challenge remains in identifying data sources and knowledge products tailored to specific policy needs.
90. The CLE found that these initiatives are consistent with external developments in the UN system, primarily the **UN 2.0 agenda**, championed by the UN Secretary General as part of the efforts to reaffirm the UN's contribution to the final stretch of Agenda 2030. The UN 2.0 library has identified IFAD initiatives in four out of five of these components, indicating that IFAD's work on KM is well aligned to UN 2.0.

⁴⁰ <https://www.mdlp4dev.org/>

⁴¹ Other members comprise FCDO, GIZ, IDB, SIDA, UNICEF, The Wellcome Trust, USAID and the World Bank.

⁴² <https://usaidlearninglab.org/resources/report-integrating-local-knowledge-development-practice>

⁴³ <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7074846633393315840/>

⁴⁴ Garbero, A., et al., 'The Athena Project: Leveraging artificial intelligence and big data for IFAD 2.0'. Report from Phase 2. International Fund for Agricultural Development, Rome, Italy, 2021.

Data analytics can uncover new insights and knowledge, for instance IFAD's use of GIS and remote sensing (e.g., Kyrgyzstan).⁴⁵

D. IFAD's positioning as knowledge partner

91. IFAD's SF's (2016-2025) ambition is "strengthening [IFAD's] ability to learn, generate knowledge and provide evidence about what works, including by leveraging the knowledge of others to deepen and complement its own knowledge base" is a critical dimension for IFAD's agenda for working better. The SF foresees that IFAD's global role would become stronger, but focused, while building on knowledge from operations and partnerships: "Drawing on both its operational experience and outside expertise, it will generate knowledge on issues related to inclusive and sustainable rural transformation, and it will draw on this knowledge in engaging in relevant global policy processes, where it will contribute its specific perspective."
92. The 2019 KM Strategy notes that IFAD's comparative advantage lies in its strong targeting of the poorest and most food-insecure people in rural areas, and in its focus on empowering them to increase their productive capacities. The strategy also notes that "from a knowledge perspective, the specificity of its focus combined with IFAD's work in diverse country contexts, enables it to: draw on a wide range of experiences; share lessons learned; bring successes from one country or region to another; and play an important role in shaping global policy discussions on agriculture and rural development. Effective partnerships to innovate, learn and scale up impact form a critical component of this comparative advantage" (IFAD 2018).
93. **In most country case studies, the partners appreciated IFAD as knowledge provider and knowledge broker.** IFAD's country level partners value its grassroots expertise, flexibility, thematic knowledge, convening ability, country presence, and focus on learning and innovation.⁴⁶ IFAD was also seen as playing an important "knowledge broker" role in countries such as Nigeria, Kyrgyzstan and Kenya, while its regular field-level supervision of projects provides hands-on monitoring and opportunities for knowledge exchange (e.g., Pakistan). Long-term presence and engagement at country level builds impact and relationships (Tunisia and Cote d'Ivoire). The decentralized structure and close connections to the field level where knowledge is generated was highlighted as being important in Cote d'Ivoire. In some countries like Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Tunisia and Cote d'Ivoire, the COSOPs and project-level KM strategies reflected and leveraged IFAD's strengths like partnerships, decentralized presence, thematic expertise, and innovation. However, in other countries like Angola, Egypt, Sierra Leone, and Kyrgyzstan, IFAD's comparative advantages were not explicitly articulated or strategically utilized in the COSOPs or country-level KM frameworks.
94. IFAD has helped to set up structures that allow for the exchange of knowledge within and across sub-regions. Partners like FAO Nigeria and Centre for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth (CIPPEC) noted IFAD's effectiveness in engaging high-level stakeholders and policymakers. Nonetheless, partners noted that IFAD's presence of late has been waning, and all note the need for further support, particularly financial, to continue their engagements with IFAD. Interviews with FAO suggest that though IFAD still has a strong reputation for expert knowledge on poverty reduction and rural

⁴⁵ https://un-two-zero.network/all-projects/?_sft_entity=ifad

⁴⁶ In Tunisia, Pakistan and Cote d'Ivoire, government partners highlighted IFAD's advantages in areas like grassroots insights, innovation, flexibility, and thematic expertise. PMUs in Malawi, Peru, and Brazil valued IFAD's expertise in participatory tools, training, and scaling solutions. Expertise in specific thematic areas was also noted as a comparative strength of IFAD as a provider of knowledge on pastoralism and livestock (Kyrgyzstan), family agriculture (Argentina), value chain development (Cote d'Ivoire), and climate resilience (Cote d'Ivoire). IFAD's ability to pilot test innovative approaches which can be replicated and scaled up was noted for example in Brazil.

development, it has been increasingly absent and protocol heavy when engaging with governments, perhaps due to staff rotations.

95. While there are good examples where KM strengths are acknowledged, there is **scope for IFAD to highlight and demonstrate its strengths to partners more consistently**. IFAD's comparative strengths in KM were recognized by country-level partners to some extent but were not adequately communicated or demonstrated. In countries such as Egypt and Madagascar, the evaluation found that certain key partners view IFAD only as a donor rather than a knowledge provider. The findings are in line with the results of the 2022 IFAD stakeholder survey from 2020 to 2022 where an average of three percent of respondents stated that expert and knowledge products were the most important thing that IFAD should do in future to strengthen its efforts to reduce rural poverty and food insecurity in their country. Similarly, low levels of response were found for KM related areas, such as "active engagement with policy dialogues" and "exchanges and SSTC" (approximately five percent and three percent of respondents respectively).
96. IFAD's limited number of staff at country level limits its ability to engage in formal coordination mechanisms, such as joint working groups, UN country teams and development partner groups, facilitated greater alignment. While the CLE found evidence of IFAD contributing inputs to joint studies and assessments (e.g., Kyrgyzstan), this did not necessarily translate into sustained, coherent KM partnerships. IFAD's KM work with co-financing institutions, such as the World Bank and regional development banks, consisted of technical cooperation around co-financed projects and sharing lessons from agricultural investments in forums such as donor coordination groups.⁴⁷ The evaluation found that that IFAD is perceived by its co-financing partners at country level as a relevant technical player in the agriculture and rural development. Exchanges with UN/RBAs focused more on operations and design rather than KM practices and building of communities of practice (CoPs).
97. **In countries with limited presence IFAD role as knowledge provide was less evident**. Low staffing levels and inability to prioritise KM prevented country offices to leverage IFAD's grassroots knowledge and experience in countries with smaller portfolios. For example, in Sierra Leone, insufficient emphasis on capturing lessons learned and addressing challenges from the field into policy dialogues hampered IFAD's effectiveness as a knowledge provider. Lack of operational KM toolkits and products to fully capitalize on IFAD's presence and expertise was highlighted in Angola and Cote d'Ivoire. The need to reinforce partnerships and the sub-optimal use or availability of grants for KM activities was noted in Angola and DRC.
98. **IFAD has not sufficiently addressed the knowledge demands of Middle-income countries (MICs)**. MICs are not only interested in IFAD loans, but also have a higher demand for technical know-how and SSTC.⁴⁸ IFAD would need stronger capacities and partnership to address these demands.⁴⁹ China expects IFAD to provide high-quality expertise and engage as a knowledge partner at eye level. Yet, absence of rigorous data collection and effective KM platforms has limited policy influence. Organizations like FAO, World Food Programme (WFP), the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have successfully established knowledge centres in China, maintained high data quality, and encouraged robust partnerships, providing IFAD with potential models for improving its own KM and policy influence strategies. In Egypt, there are

⁴⁷ Examples of this can be found in most of the CLE's country case studies including Angola, Brazil, Nigeria, the Philippines and Viet Nam.

⁴⁸ Also see FGD on SSTC in LAC (box 2).

⁴⁹ IOE's evaluation synthesis on partnerships (2018) noted that MICs have a higher demand for knowledge and that IFAD often does not have the right partnerships to address this demand.

opportunities for IFAD to support sharing of user-friendly knowledge from national research institutes to address local and regional demand, but this would require additional capacities in the MCO. The need for IFAD to clarify its role as knowledge partner will become even more pressing as UMICs are approaching graduation discussions.

E. Overall relevance and coherence

99. The CLE assessed the relevance of IFAD's 2019 KM strategy against the Strategic Framework (2016-2026). The 2019 KM strategy was a relevant document, but its scope has been reduced in the 2019 Action Plan, which was overly focussed on SKD, neglecting the roles of other divisions within IFAD's knowledge system. The 2019 KM Strategy was overtaken by the ongoing decentralisation process, which placed greater responsibility on regional and country offices, whose roles were not clearly defined in the KM strategy.

The CLE's assessment of the IFAD's KM architecture shows a fragmented picture, which evolved over time. Shortly after the adoption of the KM strategy, IFAD created several new organizational units with a mandate on KM, which appear delinked, while other relevant units with a KM role outside SKD were not involved in the strategy's implementation. The KM architecture therefore remained excessively centred around SKD without sufficient recognition of the major role of KM at country level, especially in the context of IFAD's decentralization.

Partnerships at country level remain the most relevant avenues for knowledge exchange, while globally IFAD has been less engaged in KM networks. Also, IFAD has not been able to sufficiently clarify the role of its South-South and Triangular Cooperation and Knowledge centres.

The relevance of IFAD's knowledge needs to be assessed against what is required in support of rural transformation. IFAD maintains ample potential to better capitalize on its extensive knowledge of rural development issues and contribute to identifying solutions to development challenges. What is lacking is a more demand-driven knowledge offer, a more diffused and decentralized KM architecture and a greater focus on leveraging effective KM partnerships.

Key findings on Relevance and Coherence of IFAD's KM strategies and institutional framework

- IFAD's 2019 KM strategy was aligned to the objectives of the IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025. It aimed to guide IFAD towards better integrated and more effective KM that is tailored to the new decentralized organizational structure, enhanced business model and its effectiveness framework. **Neglect of indigenous and local knowledge was a gap in the 2019 KM strategy.**
- The 2019 KM Action Plan was overly focused on one department, resulting in **limited attention to in IFAD's internal and external knowledge systems.**
- CDI's position under the Office of the President is an advantage as it enhances its ability to engage across the organization, and its nimble and focused structure makes it more agile.
- The role of the SSTC and knowledge centres vis-à-vis the establishment of new regional offices still requires clarification.
- **IFAD knowledge products are available in few languages only, limiting their utility for country stakeholder. IFAD's corporate knowledge products are not tailored or specific enough to cater to local needs.**
- Recently, IFAD has been less engaged in networks where contemporary KM concepts are discussed.
- **Grants were a key instrument to position IFAD as a knowledge player at global, regional and country levels.**
- IFAD's partnerships at country level are significant avenues for knowledge exchanges, the most important ones being with government counterparts, UN country teams, donor coordination groups and bilateral partnerships with recipients of IFAD grants.
- **In countries with limited presence IFAD role as knowledge provide was less evident.**
- In Middle Income Countries, IFAD has not sufficiently capitalized on its experience to meet the knowledge demands of policy makers.
- Recent KM initiatives indicate a relevant focus on improving data quality and availability and the focus on knowledge-based country level policy support. These initiatives are consistent with external developments in the UN system, primarily the UN 2.0 agenda.

IV. The effectiveness of IFAD's KM architecture

Evaluation question 2: To what extent has IFAD through its KM practices effectively contributed to rural transformation and what factors can explain its performance? (Effectiveness)

100. The SF (2016-2025) includes as a priority for smarter working optimizing complementarity of functions and knowledge flows between IFAD country offices and headquarters. This chapter reviews the effectiveness of IFAD's KM architecture to deliver on IFAD's KM strategy within the decentralised framework. The effectiveness of the KM strategy depends on the broader architecture and enabling environment in which it operated. The chapter probes the hypotheses with regard to visible and effective leadership to guide and adapt the KM agenda in the context of unfolding organisational changes and reforms. It also reviews the role of the KMCG as an effective link to convey country and regional concerns and demands to corporate levels and the availability of relevant KM tools at corporate and regional levels.
101. **Currently there is no framework adequately measuring KM effectiveness at corporate level.** The 2023 MOPAN assessment did not find evidence that IFAD is measuring how knowledge contributes to development outcomes. The assessment also noted that linking knowledge application to results could help maximize relevance of IFAD knowledge products. The 2019 KM Action plan has a strong focus on knowledge products. The majority of the indicators in the related results framework were not monitored, as also noted by the internal MTR of the 2019 KM strategy. The MTR noted that the results of the Action plan were not fully measurable and that monitoring the numerous indicators, some of which would require surveys, faced capacity and resource constraints. Several benchmarks were not established at the start of the plan and indicators for successful KM were found to be underdeveloped.

A. Effectiveness of the corporate KM architecture

Corporate KM Leadership

102. The IFAD Knowledge Management Framework 2014-2018 designated the Associate Vice-President (AVP) of SKD as the overall champion and leader of KM. Under the framework, the Operational Management Committee (OMC) was to provide ongoing strategic guidance and leadership on KM implementation, but the AVP SKD would be responsible for ensuring KM is prioritized by senior management and integrated into strategic planning.
103. **The Executive Management Committee has been guiding the 2019 KM Strategy.** The KM Strategy 2019-2025 designates the entire Executive Management Committee (EMC) as IFAD's KM champions. A review of EMC minutes revealed that KM has been discussed at 16 meetings between 2016 and mid-2022. Considering the importance of KM and the more than 40 meetings held each year, this is not very often. Of these sixteen meetings, KM was discussed as a day's agenda item at seven meetings and was discussed within or in relation to other topics at the other nine meetings. The main topics discussed in this context were related to the KM Action Plans (2016-2018 and 2022-2025), the KM Strategy from draft to implementation and MTR. EMC members also asked for more information on the composition and role of the KMCG and the time commitment required for this activity.⁵⁰
104. Discussions highlighted the importance of internal collaboration, coordination on global engagements, and the role of corporate working groups in shaping content. Much attention was also given to using engagements to mobilise resources and

⁵⁰ EMC Minutes, 29th Meeting held on 21st July 2022. Available [here](#).

partnering with other institutions.⁵¹ Aligning KM efforts with global best practices and cross-divisional initiatives focussing on the learning culture and KM⁵² was also mentioned.

105. **The CLE did not find evidence that the EMC has been infusing ideas on how to adjust the KM framework under the ongoing decentralisation process.** The EMC has taken major decisions to integrate KM into the corporate strategy and structures between 2017 and 2019. During its deliberations on the KM Strategy, the EMC recommended stronger linkages with other divisions, such as CDI, COM, ICT and records management, to advance the KM agenda. Since 2019, no decision was taken on KM-related issues (see Figure 5 below). The KM Action Plan 2023-2025 has been discussed by the EMC twice (in February and in July 2023).

Figure 5
EMC decisions related to KM



Source: EMC minutes

The Strategy and Knowledge Department (SKD)

106. In addition to the role of the EMC, the AVP-SKD takes de facto leadership of the KM architecture with the delegated responsibility for the KMCG⁵³ (KM annual report 2022). The 2019 KM Strategy does not specify the leading roles for KM across the organisation, as was done by the earlier KM framework (2014-2018) which stated: "IFAD managers lead the development of an organizational culture that values learning and sharing."
107. **Changes in SKD leadership have influenced strategic priorities for KM.** The MTR of the KM Strategy noted that frequent leadership changes, including three AVPs of SKD in three years, led to shifts in knowledge priorities and approaches. In 2021, the SKD's goal of "promoting partnership building to facilitate knowledge exchange, ensure visibility and mobilize resources" was replaced by "integrate supplementary funds and grants into IFAD's programme of work and leverage them to maximise impact on the ground". The following year, 2022, saw another shift in focus, with emphasis being placed on setting IFAD's strategic direction, thereby overshadowing previous goals centred on knowledge partnerships and supplementary funds and grants.⁵⁴
108. **SKD currently does not have sufficient staff capacity to guide organisation-wide KM.** With the adoption of the 2019 KM Strategy, SKD established a KM team located in the SKD front office which was expected to provide technical support and guidance on KM across all levels of the organization.

⁵¹ EMC Minutes, 18th Meeting held on 12 May 2021. Available [here](#).

⁵² EMC Minutes, 31st Meeting held on 26 August 2021. Available [here](#).

⁵³ According to the 2019 IFAD delegation of authority, the AVP-SKD is the Chair of the KMCG.

⁵⁴ The divisions under SKD, including RIA, PMI, and ECG, closely align their divisional goals with those of the department, with their knowledge-related divisional goals emphasizing on knowledge generating and disseminating activities.

Whether this small team, comprised of two professional staff,⁵⁵ was able to guide KM in IFAD is difficult to confirm. The MTR concludes that this team needs to be strengthened in order to fulfil its function. The CLE's KAP Survey confirmed the MTR observation, with around half of the respondents rating SKD's leadership in steering KM activities at IFAD as either "very weak" or "somewhat weak." Additionally, 53 per cent felt they did not receive adequate feedback from SKD on their knowledge outputs.

109. SKD launched an **online KM Resource centre** in May 2020 to offer access to KM guidelines, tools, templates and training opportunities.⁵⁶ These are valuable resources although it is not clear how often they have been used in practice. The resource centre is accessible both internally and externally and is intended to be "a resource for IFAD staff and consultants, project staff and partners who want to learn more about KM and how it can help in their daily work". Although it contains useful information to support KM efforts, the IFAD KM Resource Centre is available only in English. Since it is intended to be a resource for IFAD staff and consultants, project staff and partners, it is likely that some potential users need resources in other languages as well.

The KM Coordination Group (KMCG)

110. The KMCG was established as a platform for interregional and inter-divisional knowledge sharing. The 2014 KM framework established the interdivisional KM Coordination Group (KMCG), which is comprised of staff with KM responsibilities and focal points nominated by country directors from across IFAD.⁵⁷ The KMCG facilitates experience sharing among its members on predefined thematic areas, acts as a knowledge aggregator, links to IFAD's strategic objectives, and provides a platform for collaboration among different regions.
111. **The KMCG has not always been effective as a link into the regional divisions.** For example, in ESA, due to the lack of a comprehensive KM platform, the KMCG provides the de-facto structure for implementing KM at regional level. Nonetheless, activities undertaken by the KMCG, such as the knowledge gap map, which was shared in the ESA Business Planning Meeting of 2021, were not implemented in ESA. In other regions, the KMCG is not currently acting as an effective link between country, regional and corporate concerns; relevance to regional initiatives is limited. In WCA, the failure to appoint a KM focal point may have been a contributing factor.
112. The COVID period was a turning point in the role of the KMCG. In 2020, the KMCG launched a series of bi-weekly discussions to promote learning and adaptation during IFAD's COVID-19 response.⁵⁸ An IFAD-wide KM Community of Practice (CoP) was established in May 2020 and initially focused on support for learning during IFAD's COVID-19 response. Three online learning events from this CoP covered themes including project repurposing, digital solutions and remote supervision. Through these, learning notes, with actionable recommendations, were prepared for senior management.⁵⁹
113. **KMCG's recent focus on predefined thematic areas neglects the diverse needs of country programmes, diverting resources from project-level priorities.** Since 2020, the role of the KMCG has expanded to include the production of thematic knowledge notes on priority areas.⁶⁰ It has produced

⁵⁵ In 2022, one of the two staff members was not fully available to work on KM due to other corporate commitments.

⁵⁶ RIDE 2021

⁵⁷ KM Coordination Group will comprise: the KM Coordinator (SKD), Knowledge Management Officers and other staff with specific KM responsibilities; and representatives of PMD (including PTA), COM, HRD (Learning and Development), PRM, IOE, ICT, SKD and other divisions as appropriate, including CPMs and Country Office staff. Responsibilities associated with participation in the group will be reflected in individuals' PES and annual work plans

⁵⁸ <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/-/publication/covid-19-learning-notes> August 2020

⁵⁹ RIDE 2022

⁶⁰ 2021 Annual Report on KM (RIDE annex V, para 2)

learning notes (Knowledge in Focus) on SKD topics, such as mainstreaming themes.⁶¹ Topics come directly from SKD and are discussed and shared within the KMCG while regional and country staff are requested to provide lessons and good practices from operations.

114. **Effectiveness of harnessing operational experiences is undermined by the lack of adequate knowledge repositories.** Given that most of IFAD's primary knowledge arises from its operations, most KM efforts rely on inputs from IFAD country teams and, to lesser extent, regional and thematic teams. Frequent requests from SKD, COMS or GPR place an additional burden on country teams as they are already loaded with programme delivery. Across the organization, staff indicated that a better repository and information storage system would alleviate (although not eliminate) these requests and make better use of IFAD human resources. There are no digital repositories that are connected and searchable, with a consistent tagging of IFAD's main themes yet.⁶²

B. Effectiveness of KM strategies

Effectiveness of the corporate KM strategy

115. The aim of the 2019 KM Strategy was "to guide IFAD towards better integrated and more effective KM that is tailored to the new decentralized organizational structure and supports IFAD in achieving greater development impact".⁶³ The external MOPAN Assessment of IFAD (2023)⁶⁴ recognised the progress that IFAD has made since 2018, particularly through decentralization reforms. The report stated that IFAD has developed tools and systems to help staff access and apply knowledge and lessons learned from past projects and evaluations, but their application in new project designs is uneven.⁶⁵ Overall, KM is not yet on track in IFAD. IFAD's self-assessment (2022 RIDE) noted the 72 per cent of COSOP completion reports that were rated moderately satisfactory or above on KM in IFAD 11 through self-evaluation, but this was still below the RMF 11 target of 80 percent.⁶⁶ IOE evaluations showed that KM is among the lower performing activities in country strategies (see Chapter II.C.).
116. **A major deficit in the KM strategy is the lack of an effective monitoring and reporting system for KM results.** This also implies that there is limited accountability on results and use of resources (see Chapter VI). Since 2020, the Annual Report on Knowledge Management Action Plan Implementation has been included in the Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness (RIDE) presented to the IFAD Executive Board each year. While the KM reports provide a useful description of the KM activities undertaken in the previous year, the focus is on the KM Action Plan and not the wider IFAD KM system. Moreover, the reports do not systematically go through the results framework of the divisional KM action plans, and they provide a very limited assessment of performance.
117. At the country level there was high variability in the strength of evidence underlying KM activities. In some cases (e.g., Angola, Argentina, Mexico), robust M&E systems and data collection provided a solid foundation for KM, while in others, data quality was lacking. Persistent gaps remain in many countries in moving from data collection to deeper analysis, synthesis and packaging of lessons learned for decision-making. It is particularly concerning that the basic systematic assessments of project outcomes and impact beyond the project level are limited in most countries, with variable evidence on KM effectiveness (see Chapter V).

⁶¹ <https://intranet.ifad.org/knowledge-and-information/knowledge-in-focus>

⁶² SKD/KU and ITC have prepared an exploratory concept note to examine how AI could improve searchability.

⁶³ 2023 KM annual report

⁶⁴ This is the fourth assessment of IFAD conducted by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) with earlier assessments completed in 2010, 2013, and 2017-2018. This assessment covers the period from 2018 through 2022.

⁶⁵ QAG also noted the insufficient integration of lessons into project designs (QAG View #7, 2020)

⁶⁶ While this observation has been confirmed in the 2023 RIDE, the report did not provide the updated data.

Data was not always leveraged effectively for learning. Challenges like high staff turnover, dependence on partner systems, and limited analytical capacity constrain the development of robust evidence for KM.

Effectiveness of regional KM strategies

118. This section examines the effectiveness of KM strategies, led and guided by the regional divisions in IFAD. The KM Strategy (2019-2025) explicitly states the intention to strengthen the linkages and synergies between operations and knowledge-intensive activities at country, regional and global levels.⁶⁷ The strategy notes that KM activities will be carried out at all levels, from project level to hub level to regional level, across themes, across divisions and across departments, without imposing a unified approach. The CLE found that in the absence of specific guidance from the corporate strategy and departments, the role of the regional divisions has been pivotal in shaping KM within regions and countries.
119. **The main role of regional divisions was to extract, distil and share knowledge from operations.** This function is currently being undertaken by regional divisions, who have been establishing knowledge repositories to make knowledge available for operations (see Chapter IV.C.). Regional divisions also undertake annual portfolio reviews which provide updates on portfolio performance and some analytical insights, but these have a limited knowledge sharing function. More recently, knowledge packs (K-packs) are being developed as tailor-made products to support project designs. They are a simple product that combines knowledge from existing platforms as an input into design processes.⁶⁸ While the use of K-packs is still at an early stage, it demonstrates an effort to enhance the use of knowledge for improved project designs.⁶⁹
120. **Within the regional divisions, clarity on strategic directions has been guiding KM priorities.** Overall, PMD has maintained its commitment to KM, which is also reflected in the consistent use of the department goal “greater innovation, policy advantage and lesson learning”. The commitment has also transpired into the divisions, especially OPR, NEN, ESA, and WCA. Some divisions, such as APR and LAC, have defined their own priorities for KM. Clarity on the strategic direction has been an important factor contributing to the positive performance of KM in LAC and APR regions, as also confirmed by IOE’s CSPE ratings (see figure 2 in Annex V).
121. APR has set itself even more detailed divisional goals with integrated communication and visibility as its additional goals.⁷⁰ In 2021, APR further expanded one of its divisional goals to IFAD public goods, encouraging its staff’s participation in technical working groups and discussion panels at global events. APR has adopted practices to support KM at operational level. The APR KM-COM clinics are a flagship KM practice that was reportedly useful for building project-level KM capacity, as well as in promoting greater harmonization between KM approaches across countries.⁷¹

⁶⁷ The KM Framework 2014-2018 did not set out the **role of the regional divisions**.

⁶⁸ The process begins with country teams sending the regional front office concept notes for future projects. The front office team then looks for literature of evidence-based examples and information regarding specific activities, project sub-components and components proposed in the concept notes. The country team uses the K-pack to fine tune the proposals before beginning project design missions and documents. Recently, RIA also contributed to K-packs and have provided examples and evidence from other regions as well as impact studies.

⁶⁹ At the time of this CLE K-packs have been created for El Salvador, Ecuador, Colombia, Angola, Comoros, Malawi, Mozambique, and Uganda

⁷⁰ Relevant knowledge management activities, such as KM and communication plans, learning events, high profile regional events, knowledge products generated by regional grants and SSTC, were included under “learning” and “communication and visibility” sub-goals.

⁷¹ APR also provided more targeted support to some countries, e.g., in Bangladesh for the establishment of a CoP (with monthly meetings) and the development of a KM plan; or in Malaysia, where the division was asked to do an induction on KM at project start-up. Systematic review of KM sections of design and supervision reports helped to strengthen project KM systems and created occasions for learning and knowledge sharing to inform project management. This practice has been discontinued since the departure of the previous KM focal point, due to insufficient human resources.

122. LAC specified its learning opportunities under its divisional goals in 2021. In 2022, it further added internal knowledge sharing related goals under its divisional “teambuilding” goal, such as “knowledge sharing space among assistants implemented (lightbulb)”, “dedicated space for teambuilding and knowledge sharing during LAC planning week”, fostering a unique knowledge sharing culture within the division. In LAC, the development of complementary platforms and products has produced a system to support project and, in the future, COSOP design by incorporating good KM practices. The LAC knowledge platform acts as a repository of knowledge products generated through the lending and non-lending portfolio, as well as of events.⁷²
123. WCA had been spearheading some good KM practices early on, but they were later discontinued with the changes in staffing and leadership. One of the most interesting mechanisms at the sub-regional level was the KM committee (KMCO) established by the Dakar hub in 2019. The KMCO gathered all staff working on KM in the sub-region and met regularly to exchange knowledge; it also supported project staff in the development of knowledge products. The practice was based on the hub model and has been discontinued since IFAD transitioned to the MCO model and hub staff retired. Attempts to extend the model to the other two hubs (Yaoundé and Abidjan) were reported but did not succeed.⁷³ Some useful practices for sharing operational experiences were not continued.⁷⁴ The Knowledge Gap Map pilot conducted by WCA was also not replicated in new designs.
124. **Knowledge drain has been an important factor undermining the continuity and consistency of KM in the regions.** The evaluation observed significant loss of knowledge from regions as a result of staff reassignments. Between 2020 and 2023, IFAD went through a process of reassigning staff that have been on their position for some time to new positions. The three waves of reassignment resulted in changes of staff for 36 positions across the five divisions. The country director role was notably affected, with 27 reassignments. The changes followed IFAD's strategic efforts to align leadership expertise with evolving regional requirements. APR division had nine reassignments in the initial two years. LAC and WCA divisions had six reassignments each. Reassignments have affected country-level partnerships and often disrupted KM processes. Newly arrived staff had their priorities on portfolio management and took time to familiarise themselves with KM practices.

C. Effectiveness of mechanisms for sharing knowledge

125. **Since 2016, there has been an increase in KM events with focus knowledge sharing within IFAD.** Emphasis on mainstreaming themes (e.g., climate change, nutrition on, youth), adoption of new operational processes and instruments (e.g. private sector development, SSTC) together with turnover of staff have intensified the need for sharing knowledge within IFAD. There has been a steady increase in IFAD knowledge sharing events, such as workshops, learning events and forums (see Annex V). The adoption of remote meeting tools during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021) enabled broad-based participation in these events. This section looks at the tools and practices that have contributed to the growth of knowledge sharing in IFAD.

⁷² In LAC, the MCO structure has helped knowledge sharing across country portfolios. In addition, the network of LAC KM focal points facilitated knowledge flows from country portfolios to the SSTC and Knowledge Centre and to the LAC knowledge platform. Furthermore, ECG staff decentralised to LAC have set up a system to provide knowledge on a demand-driven basis.

⁷³ KM practices developed by the Dakar hub, including M&E and KM guidelines, case study manual, KM trainings and annual hub workshops, aimed at strengthening project KM approaches. The Dakar Hub google website made products generated by the Hub accessible for regional PMUs.

⁷⁴ At the regional level, the review meetings of project design and supervision reports were explicitly aimed at improving country operations but were discontinued and only resumed in 2023 for problem projects with the aim of reducing the gap between PMD and IOE ratings. Annual Hub Workshops in West Africa, Regional Implementation Workshops also provided opportunities to bring staff from country programs to openly reflect, discuss and share their ideas and lessons learned, as well as to support cross-learning and innovation.

Knowledge platforms

126. **Numerous digital KM platforms have emerged to support knowledge sharing, contributing to the overall fragmented nature of the knowledge system.** The evaluation found that the KM platforms provided the required infrastructure to share and access lessons and good practices more effectively. The CLE identified 49 relevant KM platforms, which were of particular interest to the evaluation (see table 4 in Annex III).⁷⁵ While the flexibility of platforms is an advantage to keep costs low and adaptive to demand, it also poses a challenge in terms of ICT infrastructure which requires consistency and reliability of such platforms in order to keep maintenance costs low and ensure quality support. Platforms that have a dedicated facilitator or curator (e.g., EvalForward or The Smallholder and Agri-SME Finance and Investment Network, SAFIN) are usually more effective in generating and sharing knowledge but require funding to be continued. Others, such as the Dgroups, only rely on their members and can therefore be maintained at low cost. The MTR noted the fragmentation of platforms, which did not enhance the effectiveness of the overall knowledge system.
127. Although outside the core scope of the CLE, the evaluation noted that platforms such as OBI and X-Desk, where most internal documentation is stored (e.g., for grants and projects), provide an important repository for documentation but do not have a function of exchanging and managing knowledge. For example, in the KAP survey, IFAD staff and consultant respondents indicated that the IFAD knowledge platforms are not user friendly. About 80 per cent of respondents disagreed that IFAD's corporate platforms were easy to navigate and helpful in finding relevant knowledge. In addition to these platforms, IFAD maintains a well-stocked library in HQ premises. Library provides issues regular updates on newly acquired books and articles as well as publication lists tailored to the interests of users.
128. **Beyond the corporate platforms, there is a demand for platforms providing contextualised knowledge in local languages.** For instance, regional platforms are operated in region-specific languages such as Spanish in LAC. The LAC knowledge platform is a sharing tool and repository for key knowledge products and their dissemination, including studies, research articles and reports.⁷⁶ The vast majority of these documents are in Spanish. The LAC knowledge platform was originally conceived in 2020 as a LAC microsite through conversations with COM and ITC for the purposes of sharing experiences and KM products, retaining documents at the end of project cycles, and including news and external partner publications.⁷⁷ As of 30 March 2023, the repository has expanded to 446 items, and contains internal documentation (project documentation and knowledge products derived from these, IOE publications) and external documentation (scholarly articles) that relate to LAC. The platform is hosted on a publicly available website.⁷⁸ LAC also benefits from the ECG LAC Knowledge repository, a dropbox-based platforms to share ECG documents specific for to LAC.
129. In sub-Saharan Africa, the IFAD-hosted regional platform (One ESA) is complemented by IFAD's presence in external regional platforms. The One ESA platform was set up to allow demand-driven discussions between staff of ESA, PMI,

⁷⁵ The desk review identified five subcategories of knowledge platforms within IFAD systems: i) networks; ii) CoPs listed in the IFAD corporate and KM Resource Centre website; iii) Living Repositories; iv) Websites and v) Social media platforms. Within this categorization, media used for the diffusion were also identified, specifically: D-Groups and learning platforms for CoPs; internal and external websites and social media groups and live feeds for social media platforms. For the scope of this study, only knowledge platforms were taken into account; external websites and live feeds for social media platforms are thus not included in the 49 platforms.

⁷⁶ LAC portfolio stocktake 2022

⁷⁷ This was presented to the Beijing and Addis Ababa SSTC and knowledge centre heads, and justified as a good KM function, and as a way to reduce costs. It was rejected by other heads since APR found that it would be too complex, compete with IFAD.org, and require too much maintenance and staff.

⁷⁸ <https://lac-conocimientos-sstc.ifad.org/es/inicio>

ECG, FMD, COM and others as relevant, who work on ESA operations. It is intended to aid planning, information sharing, and collaborative problem solving. One ESA meetings are held quarterly for 90 minutes, and members are free to propose items to the steering committee. Other external platforms in which IFAD participates are the Agribusiness Deal room, hosted by The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). This is a matchmaking platform that convenes stakeholders to facilitate partnerships and investments in African agriculture. It specifically supports governments and SMEs with access to finance and partnership opportunities. SKD staff outposted to Nairobi have been involved with this event by providing and brokering knowledge on climate finance and resilience, and IFAD's experience with financial institutions.

130. **The CLE found that many projects have invested in websites for information sharing but was unable to assess their effectiveness.** Project websites, established by individual projects, were easily accessible by external stakeholders and provide valuable material on project-specific achievements and lessons which are the basis of broader learning-oriented analysis. Data on usage were not available. The CLE noted that in most cases, such websites are discontinued after projects close as governments do not continue paying for the hosting services, leading to a loss of valuable information.

Communities of Practice

131. IFAD provides the basic infrastructure to support knowledge sharing, which has enabled many Communities of Practice (CoPs) to be established and continued at low costs. CoPs and networks connect IFAD staff at country, regional and corporate levels, and with external partners. They provide effective KM functions, allowing IFAD to link to external knowledge sources and providing flexible, demand-driven services for IFAD staff. This is particularly the case when IFAD participates in CoPs together with external institutions.

Communities of practice are informal (spontaneous) and formal (intentionally created by organizations) groups of professionals or practitioners within a specific thematic domain. Together they develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, KM tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems.

132. The CLE analysed 31 CoPs which IFAD participates in, either as a host and facilitator, or as a member. About half of these consist of Dgroups.⁷⁹ IFAD started a dedicated Dgroup on 18 May 2020; the group had 2,343 members when last visited and featured 16 subgroups, all established after 2020. These subgroups (also called Dgroups themselves) have an average membership of 142 members, ranging from 5 to 1340. Their average running time is 19 months, and the average number of messages posted is 3 per month – with a minimum of 0 for the less active groups and up to 14 for the more active ones. The largest Dgroup is the IFAD Innovation Network (with 1340 members) and the most active is the Farmers' Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (with an average of 14 messages per month); at least four of the 16 subgroups do not appear to be active, with only one or no messages posted since their establishment.
133. **The CoPs contribute to bundling knowledge, expertise and data on a particular subject.** They also facilitate the transfer of good practices. When there is sufficient engagement, CoPs are efficient by making sure efforts are not duplicated and mistakes are less likely to be repeated because it makes it possible to find knowledge, information and data from IFAD but also further afield. In addition, decision-makers are better informed when they are members of CoPs. CoPs nested within regional divisions might have more of a knowledge retention role and be able to support knowledge exchange between new and experienced IFAD staff. COPs can also expand the institutions capacity in a certain area -

⁷⁹ <https://ifad.dgroups.io/g/IFAD>

especially if this area does not have an institutional home. For example, GeoGroup bundles knowledge, expertise and data on GIS and remote sensing. IFAD gets access to innovation and new tech/data and applies it in its operations. The CoP provides networks and actual problems that can be solved with GIS. Finally, CoPs can support integration of cross cutting issues. For example, the Gender Network has over 2,000 member including IFAD gender focal points across the organization, project staff at country level and external partners.

134. **CoPs support knowledge sharing at an inter-organizational level.** For example, SAFIN has links to 50 organizations including UN organizations, while the Gender Network links more than 2000 members from the UN and IFIs but also at local and national level. In some cases, KM partnerships such as platforms, forum and CoPs have been sustainable after external economic support ended. EvalForward, a joint initiative between RBAs and CGIAR, is part of IFAD's work programme and budget through 2024 with an explicit mention under communication and KM.⁸⁰ EvalForward has a distinctive niche in evaluation capacity strengthening but needs a reinvestment of political capital to strengthen its position.
135. **IFAD CoPs are often set up spontaneously to address knowledge needs.** The advantage of CoPs are that their establishment and maintenance is relatively low cost. ECG staff decentralized to the LAC MCOs set up an informal CoP for colleagues in LAC to request and access their technical knowledge. The shared Dropbox includes documents enumerating tacit knowledge (things as simple as a list of IFAD-specific acronyms in English and Spanish) to more technical knowledge such as how-to-notes, or social and environmental plan examples for project designs. In ESA, the Learning Series CoP is well known throughout the division and popular. Its informality and distance from an institutional source is what seems to give it its greatest interest, and it provides opportunities for learning across offices, divisions and recently with partners (PMUs as well as implementing partners) on a wide range of thematic and operational issues. In APR, the largest CoP is [IFAD Asia](#), currently hosted on a Facebook group with around 12,000 members. It is managed by the regional division and administered by the PLA assigned to the South Asia MCO. IFAD Asia was founded in 2016 and was initially structured as a mini website hosted by the IFAD website; the original [IFAD Asia platform](#) is still live but has become inactive since 2019 when the Facebook Group was launched. The IFAD Asia CoP is an effort to improve knowledge exchange within the region as well as with external stakeholders.
136. **While KM results stemming from Communities of Practice are positive, the evaluation found that the lack of funding had an adverse impact on their sustainability.** Dgroups and social media provide low cost options, when no funding is available (as it happened in the cases of Gender Network, FIDAFrique).⁸¹ In some cases, services that were provided by CoPs, such as newsletters, have been discontinued.⁸² One of the most successful regional CoPs, [FIDAFrique / IFADAfrica](#), moved to a Facebook page after funding expired in 2018. The page still counts over 18,000 members in more than 20 countries.⁸³
137. **Weak monitoring coupled with limited time and funding for the facilitation of CoPs were the major factors limiting their effectiveness.** The effectiveness of CoPs is not comprehensively monitored by IFAD. Quantitative data such as numbers of members and messages can be easily generated and analysed, together with qualitative measures of usefulness from users. There are examples of good practices in M&E of CoPs, such as EvalForward which analyses

⁸⁰ Source: FAO, CGIAR/IAES, IFAD & WFP. 2023. Independent Review of EvalForward Community of Practice – Final report. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc5375en>

⁸¹ Focus group discussion with retirees, 19 April 2023.

⁸² Focus group discussion with CoP facilitators, 4 May 2023.

⁸³ IFAD, 2023. Summary of Knowledge Management (KM) in WCA. Working document, unpublished.

data and statistics related to use (Google analytics, reading of the Mailchimp newsletter, and participation levels in webinars and discussions). It also collects 'change stories' which represent testimony of interactions with EvalForward over the years. SAFIN tracks the relationships and collaborations that have been emerging through social networks analysis and an annual survey. It has also developed a toolkit⁸⁴ for networks but which can be applicable to CoPs if the purpose is to foster collaboration.

138. **Despite these important roles that CoPs have played in the past, focus group discussions indicated that the support and interest is waning.** This may also be an indication that absorptive capacities are overstretched and that engagement in CoPs is no longer an immediate priority. For example, in the KAP survey, approximately 62 per cent of respondents disagreed that CoPs at IFAD are accessible and provide a useful platform for connection. Additionally, 61 per cent of respondents have never engaged in online discussions or posted comments in a CoP or a practitioner's forum related to their fields.

Knowledge forums

IFAD's participation in global knowledge forums, while being relevant, is disconnected from the broader KM architecture. International forums are recognized in IFAD's KM strategy as important venues to advance IFAD's visibility, and IFAD has been active on key thematic areas. Global knowledge forums connect IFAD with key partners and stakeholders, and support knowledge sharing at national, regional, and international levels for accountability and learning. The CLE analysed the three main forums established by IFAD, namely the Farmers' Forum, the Indigenous Peoples' Forum and the Global Forum on Remittances. The lack of monitoring around the results of these events posed a challenge for the evaluation's assessment. Despite this, the evaluation noted that the activities of forums are overall not well connected to the overall KM architecture. Forums focus on high visibility events at HQ level, and their thematic discussions appear to rely on extraction of lessons and knowledge from IFAD's operations but limited ability to feed knowledge back into them.

84 <https://smallfoundation.ie/impact-networks-measuring-towards-success/>

Box 3 Global Forums for knowledge

Since 2005, the **Farmers Forum** gathers farmers' leaders from around the world, representing the interests of millions of smallholders and rural producers who have direct interactions with IFAD and its partner institutions. The [Seventh Global Meeting of the Farmers' Forum](#) (February 2020) was held in collaboration with FAO at IFAD Headquarters. In 2023 [Regional Farmers' Forum meetings](#) took place in a decentralised (hybrid) format in Bassam, Bangkok, Dar es Salaam, Istanbul and Tunis.

Through the **Indigenous Peoples' Forum**, IFAD promotes the use of indigenous knowledge for the design of development programs and policies. IFAD organizes the [global meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum](#) in conjunction with the Governing Council, which serves as IFAD's main decision-making body. Through these consultations with indigenous peoples' representatives at national, regional, and international levels, the Forum seeks to enhance IFAD's accountability, development effectiveness, and leadership among other development organizations.

The **Global Forum on Remittances, Investment and Development (GFRID)** is a UN-recognized, informal process that brings together stakeholders working on remittances and migration for development. Since its inception in 2007, GFRID has been organizing biannual summits coinciding with the [International Day of Family Remittances \(IDFR\)](#). The [last GFRID Summit](#) took place at the UN Office at Nairobi, Kenya, on 14-16 June 2023, in collaboration with UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the World Bank. Among the recommendations emerging from this summit was the need to strengthen the collection and analysis of remittance data for more informed decision making, as well as to invest in financial and digital education.

Source: IFAD website

D. KM and scaling up: a review of signature solutions in IFAD

139. The 2019 KM strategy recognised the need to improve curation, sharing and use of evidence, lessons learned and scaling up of good practice. From the strategy it is unclear whether KM are just informing the next pilot or small project, or whether it can contribute to scale in a more meaningful way. Relevant knowledge generation and sharing have a key role in helping to enable the type of thinking, insights and action that will get the required scale of action.
140. The CLE has used the term "signature solutions" to describe intervention methodologies or practices that were found repeatedly in IFAD's portfolios and operations. The evaluation used a mapping methodology to track how solutions were introduced, shared and used in IFAD.⁸⁵ For this analysis, ten frequently used solutions were selected: Leasehold forestry, Public-Private-Producer Partnership (4Ps), Small-scale irrigation (SSI), Homestead gardens (HG), Gender Action Learning System (GALS), Learning Routes (LRs), Seeds Certification, New Ruralities, Experience Capitalization and Farmer Field School (FFS). The CLE was interested to know how knowledge on these solutions was shared. This review has helped to identify effective mechanisms for bringing implementation experiences to scale.⁸⁶
141. **Scaling solutions that are based on local knowledge is part of IFAD's DNA.** Leasehold forestry, small-scale irrigation, seeds certification and homestead gardening were solutions based on local knowledge. Farmer Field Schools (FFS) provided platforms for linking experts and local knowledge. Learning Routes (LRs) and experience capitalisation offer experiential learning opportunities, allowing

⁸⁵ A "snowball search" methodology was developed to track knowledge sharing of signature solutions across IFAD platforms by using the IFAD website, IFAD intranet, IFAD Finder and cross-referencing information across tools. The scope of the mapping was comprehensive, as the items included in the analysis are not only those that primarily deal with the subject of the signature solution involved, but also those in which the signature solution is mentioned marginally, as long as the knowledge of this solution is shared to some extent.

⁸⁶ The study was part of evidence block three "Thematic Deep Dives" covering a larger number of countries beyond the case studies.

farmers and development practitioners to glean insights from successful approaches and customize them for their specific contexts.

142. **The review showed that how knowledge was documented and shared had an effect on scaling.** Effective mechanisms for knowledge sharing that led to the adoption of these solutions were project design missions, workshops and events. Presentation of solutions through formalised knowledge products and external studies enabled visibility at high-level regional events (leasehold forestry, learning routes). Some signature solutions feature in a range of knowledge products, including technical guidance and case studies (e.g., GALS, experience capitalisation). Solutions that have been less well documented and reviewed, relied mainly on project-to-project sharing (SSI, homestead gardens, seed certification).
143. **Independent assessment of success and failures was not systematically built into the scaling process.** Dissemination of signature solutions has extensively used communication tools, such as webposts, blogs, news items and events, in the case of 4Ps also IFAD President's speech. An independent assessment of results was rarely done before scaling up.⁸⁷ For the FFSs there was a stocktake undertaken by PMI together with FAO. Other solutions that were widely promoted in IFAD, such as GALS and 4Ps were never independently assessed.
144. **Bringing local implementation experiences to scale depended on partnerships.** Solutions like Experience Capitalisation and Seeds Certification were not inventions of IFAD. Collaborations with external partners led to impactful solutions, such as the development of the 4Ps approach with SNV for the Partnering Value project and the New Ruralities grant in collaboration with CEPAL. Experience capitalisation was a methodology developed by the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA). Learning routes were promoted through collaboration with Procasur.
145. **Despite the success of these solutions in the field, their dissemination and outreach have declined in recent years.** Since 2019, there has been a notable decrease in the dissemination of solutions, especially in six areas: Learning Routes, 4Ps, GALS, Seeds Certification, New Ruralities, and Experience Capitalization. Additionally, from 2020 onward, the reach of these solutions to external audiences has significantly diminished. With both internal and external outreach declining, there has been a noticeable shift in the dissemination pattern, moving from targeting external audiences to focusing more on internal ones.

E. Overall effectiveness of IFAD's KM architecture

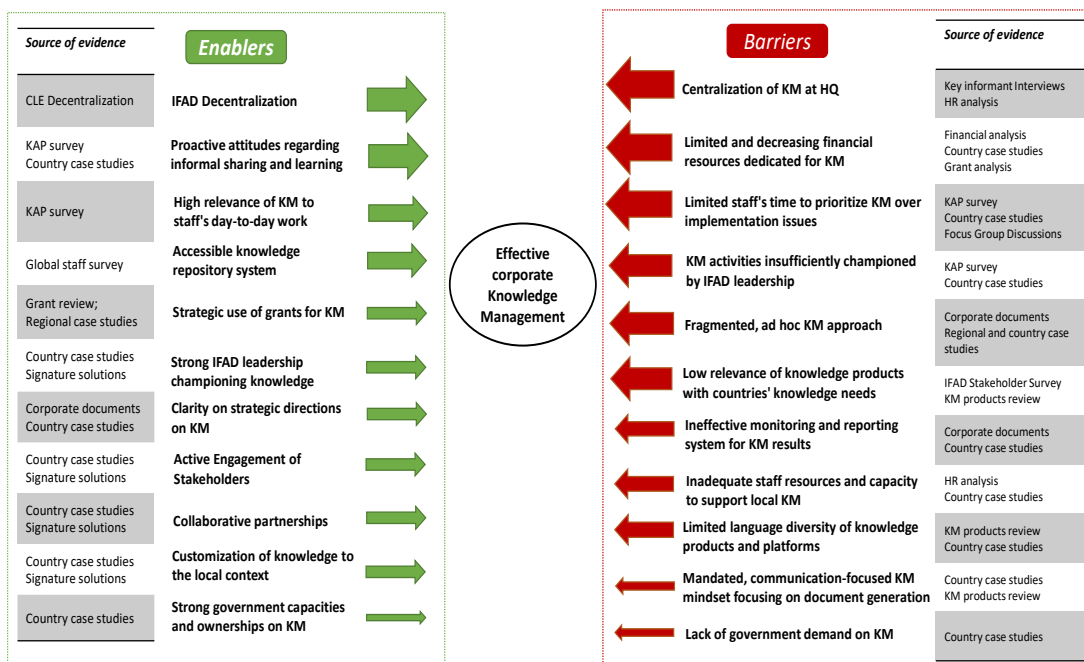
146. The CLE found that IFAD's KM architecture had limitations delivering the expected results. Leadership at executive level fully supported the integration of the KM strategy in 2019 but could have been more visible half-way through the strategy, when the architecture became increasingly disjoint from the ongoing decentralisation process and decentralised KM roles would have required strengthening. While IFAD has put into place the infrastructure to support more broad-based and inclusive knowledge sharing, mechanisms for support and coordination had limited effectiveness at regional and country levels.
147. IFAD's decentralization process has been a positive factor for generating contextualised knowledge and taking advantage of on-the ground partnerships. Despite this, the centralized KM function at HQ has not adequately bridged country-level knowledge with IFAD's corporate priorities and did not provide a flexible framework to support the generation or sharing of knowledge gleaned from projects. The regional division play a pivotal role, but currently do not have the capacities and tools to support a consistent approach to KM in the countries. The

⁸⁷ An exception was the evaluation of leasehold forestry as part of an IOE project evaluation, but this did not have an effect on scaling up.

inability of the KM system to deliver a coherent approach has led to visible disconnect between KM practices promoted at corporate level, and the demands at country level. This disconnect meant that the limited financial resourcing and staff time to prioritize KM, along with a lack of recognition by leadership, prevented an adequately supportive environment.

148. Figure 6 below summarises the forces, which enabled or hindered the effectiveness of knowledge management in IFAD, alongside the weight of each factor in determining its influence, as identified during the CLE.

Figure 6
Enablers and barriers for effective KM in IFAD



Source: CLE elaboration based on case studies, FGDs and interviews

149. Individual initiative has been a strong force in supporting some of the more salient results. Where the analysis saw staff recognizing the value of KM in their day-to-day work and proactively sharing knowledge, both informally and through accessible knowledge repositories, KM practices were more effective. Additionally, where country teams were led by CDs who prioritized km through a clear approach and sought grants to support knowledge partnerships, KM led to more salient outcomes. In these instances, staff actively engaged stakeholders through collaborative co-creation and the contextualization of knowledge. But where KM took a more fragmented approach and monitoring systems were ineffective, KM support inadequate, or knowledge irrelevant to the needs of partner countries, positive outcomes were not found. The low diversity of languages for IFAD's knowledge products and a limited, communication-focused view of KM also prevented higher-level achievements and effectiveness. Finally, government partner's prioritization and demand for knowledge played a significant role in determining the effectiveness of KM in our research. These factors will be further explored in the following Chapter V.

Key findings on the Effectiveness of IFAD's KM architecture

- Overall, there are clear limitations in the effectiveness of IFAD's KM architecture and strategies.
- **A major deficit in the KM strategy is the lack of an effective monitoring and reporting system for KM results.**
- **The corporate strategy does not seem effective in guiding KM practices in partner countries.** Regional divisions have taken different approaches to integrate KM.
- **The CLE did not find evidence that the EMC has been infusing ideas on how to adjust the KM framework under the ongoing decentralisation process.**
- SKD currently does not have the technical capacity to provide organisation-wide guidance on KM.
- The KMCG provides an important platform for interregional and inter-divisional knowledge sharing, but it has not always been effective as a link into the regional division.
- **Effectiveness of harnessing operational experiences is undermined by the lack of adequate knowledge repositories.** Beyond the corporate platforms, there is a demand for platforms providing contextualised knowledge in local languages.
- The CoPs contribute to bundling knowledge, expertise and data on a particular subject. **Weak monitoring coupled with limited time and funding for the facilitation of CoPs** were the major factors limiting their effectiveness.
- While there been a noticeable increase in knowledge sharing activities, facilitated through new digital collaboration and meeting formats, the focus of knowledge sharing was on IFAD's internal issues and audiences.
- The role of KM for scaling up has been insufficiently defined at corporate level. Scaling of implementation experiences was overly focussed on communication. The independent assessment of results was rarely part of scaling processes.

V. Effectiveness of IFAD KM practices in partner countries

Evaluation question 2: To what extent has IFAD through its KM practices effectively contributed to rural transformation and what factors can explain its performance? (Effectiveness)

150. Working closely with partner countries in support of transformative rural development is at the heart of IFAD's mandate and strategy. The SF (2016-2025) expects IFAD to work "better" by strengthening the quality of IFAD's country programmes through innovation, knowledge sharing, partnerships and policy engagement; and "smarter" by delivering development results in a cost-effective way that best responds to partner countries' evolving needs. This chapter examines the extent to which these results were achieved in case study countries. In addition to the "better" and "smarter" objectives, the CLE also assessed the "bigger", by enhancing its development impact through scale-up, replication and policy change. The "bigger" also requires assembling different types of knowledge for solutions for complex development problems.
151. The chapter assesses the effectiveness of country-level KM practices in their contribution to these results. The CLE case studies have reviewed the evidence on KM results that was reported for each country. The reported results were carefully triangulated and validated through stakeholder interviews, documents review and cross-country analysis. The evidence was then synthesised and mapped against the pathways in the ToC (Annex I). This exercise helped to identify the practices that were effective in their contribution to the three development results and validate the pathways that have been effective leading to these results.
152. The chapter also examines the factors that can explain the presence of different types of KM practices and their effectiveness. In doing so, it also provides an assessment of the underlying assumptions of the ToC, which were mostly not met and therefore explain the areas of low effectiveness. Evidence is drawn from the 20 country case studies but is also triangulated using reviews of IOE CSPEs, QAG design reviews and data from corporate monitoring systems.
153. The overall finding from this study was that **KM has been operating inconsistently across IFAD's global operations and therefore has achieved inconsistent results**. While many country programmes have employed effective KM practices to enhance development results, KM often remains ill-defined and inadequately supported.

A. Effective KM practices and contributing factors

154. The aim of the case studies was to map the KM practices within the countries, determine their effectiveness and identify any factors that can explain these results. The case studies used the common categories: knowledge generation, knowledge sharing, knowledge use and knowledge brokering. In addition, they used the Six Generations KM Framework (see box 4 below). The framework helped to link the practices with their intended focus and results, and to identify practices supporting transformative change. In an effective KM system, different generations co-exist with complementary practices and results.

Box 4
The six generations of knowledge management

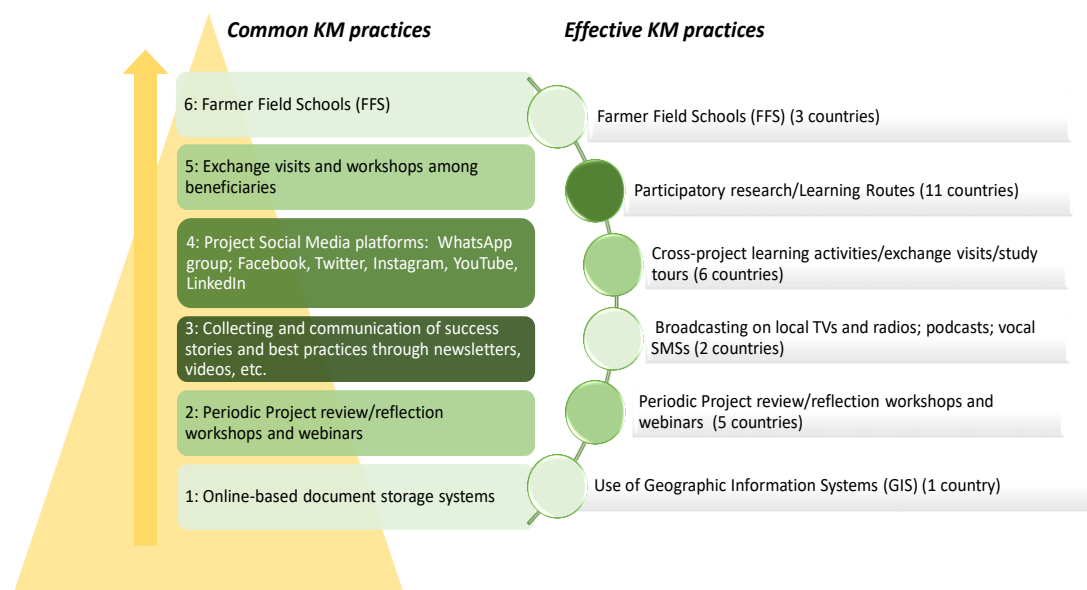
The analytical framework for this CLE is based on the six, co-existing generational approaches to Knowledge Management for Development (KM4D). **First generation KM** is anchored in an ICT-based approach and primarily treats knowledge as a commodity that can be stored in databases and repositories. In the **second generation**, knowledge is increasingly recognized as an organizational asset and the focus is on KM systems. **Third generation KM** emphasizes knowledge sharing between organizations, using more innovative tools like communities of practice (CoPs). **Fourth generation KM** is people-centric and focuses on organizational structures and cultures. **Fifth generation KM** broadens the scope further, aiming at stakeholder empowerment and inclusion into the KM process. Finally, the **sixth generation KM** ('decolonization of knowledge') considers the various knowledges, including indigenous and local knowledges, and aims at sustainable, adaptive solutions.⁵⁸

Source: CLE elaboration, based on Cummings et al, 2013 & 2019, Boyes et al 2023).

Effective KM practices in case study countries

155. The country case studies found high variability in KM practices, within and between countries. The common practices are mapped in figure 7. In addition to the “common practices”, practices that the country case studies were able to link to concrete results were classified as “effective”. (See Table 5 in Annex III for a comprehensive list of practices)

Figure 7
Common and effective KM practices in country case studies



Source: CLE country case studies

156. Maintaining repositories for knowledge products was the most common first-generation practice (9 of 20 countries). Use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was an effective KM practice found in Kyrgyzstan. Periodic project reviews were more common (15 of 20), building on existing institutional mechanisms for project learning. They were effectively used for KM in five countries (Philippines, Pakistan, Malawi, Angola and Kenya).
157. Consistent with the third and fourth generation focus of current KM4D, all country programmes collected and communicated success stories through newsletters, videos, and articles in local news to some extent. Social media (a fourth-

generation practice) were an informal, people-centred approach to knowledge sharing and primarily dependent on personnel initiatives in 16 of 20 countries, although there was a notable conceptual difficulty for project and country staff in separating these from pure communications activities. Nevertheless, this practice was very effective in DRC and Sierra Leone.

158. The more effective KM practices, with strong evidence for their contribution to results, were centred on the more transformative fifth and sixth-generation practices. Cross-project exchanges and workshops with PMUs were common (16 of 20 countries) and effective for adaptive management. But coupled with more participatory practices and learning focused on local knowledge, such as beneficiary study tours and exchanges using the learning routes methodology (e.g., Malawi, Angola, DRC, Brazil, Sudan) were marked by a high level of effectiveness and lead more concrete development results.
159. Farmer Field Schools, which integrate scientific best practices with local knowledge, were the most common sixth-generation practice found in the cases, present in 9 of the 20 countries, and highlighted it as effective in three countries. This practice was marked by a high degree of stakeholder empowerment in finding adaptive and sustainable solutions in specific contexts. Combined with a foundation of earlier generation practices and factors laid out later in this chapter, countries like Sudan, Brazil, and the Philippines stood out markedly in utilizing later generation practices towards the three development results.

Presence of consistent KM frameworks

160. **Clearly defined KM frameworks play a crucial role guiding the types of KM practices and overall KM effectiveness at the country level.** These frameworks include well-defined KM strategies, clear outlines of KM roles and responsibilities, and aligned coordination between the headquarters of IFAD, regional offices, and countries. The Philippines, Vietnam, and Brazil had clear KM strategies or action plans at both the national and project levels. They also maintained consistent engagement with the IFAD headquarters and regional offices to support KM activities. Furthermore, these frameworks allowed Brazil and Pakistan to develop user-centric knowledge products aimed at diverse audiences; Vietnam, Philippines, Sudan, and Argentina established effective mechanism for knowledge exchange at local, national, and regional levels. This amplified inclusion through KM practices led to a higher level of transformation.
161. **Fragmented or lagging KM frameworks did not enable effective KM.** Most projects only introduced KM activities at the late stage of project implementation; therefore, the first and second generational KM practices aiming to strengthen KM infrastructure were insufficient. In China, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) project KM did not receive consistent attention and commitment. They lacked a solid foundation in KM infrastructure and primarily relied on third or fourth-generation KM practices. In Angola, China, DRC, Tunisia, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, and Sierra Leone, KM approaches tended to be ad hoc with a lack of coherent understanding of KM among project-level stakeholders. The confusion between KM and communication persisted, causing prioritization of showcasing results over holistic knowledge processes.
162. **There was often a broad disconnect between KM frameworks and the demands on the ground.** Lack of strategic focus and alignment with country-specific needs did not enable effective KM. Corporate and regional strategies fell short in guiding KM practices on the ground, leading to less clarity on KM approaches and responsibilities at the project level. In China and Egypt, where the demand from the government on IFAD knowledge was strong, KM frameworks were not effective to address the specific needs of the government.
163. **KM frameworks that were aligned with COSOP-defined thematic priorities were more likely to be successful, but these were rare.** Argentina's 2016-

2022 COSOP was successful in setting strategic objectives for KM and Sudan's 2021-2027 COSOP and KM Strategy align well, providing clear objectives for KM. This suggests that KM should not be viewed as an isolated project component but, rather, integrated into broader country-level objectives. Despite this potential, most COSOPs rarely clarified how KM could be operationalized, leading to insufficient attention to implementation, resourcing, and capacity-building factors.

164. **Inconsistent KM approaches and isolated KM practices had lower prospects for sustainability.** A recurring issue was the lack of a comprehensive strategy for KM sustainability, particularly in countries like DRC, Mexico, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria, where sustainability relies heavily on individuals or lacks consideration in project exit strategies. Issues such as staff turnover, project suspensions, and shifting government focus further compromise sustainability. These countries also did not exhibit robust M&E to assess sustainability of KM outcomes or a systematic approach to include planning for KM sustainability from the outset and did not place a strong emphasis on institutionalization and partnerships. This compromised their sustainability.

IFAD country presence and capacities

165. **IFAD's country presence, including the type of country offices, operational mode and stability, contributed to KM effectiveness.** The Philippines, Vietnam and Sudan, showed the positive impact of IFAD's presence on KM effectiveness. For instance, in Philippines and Sudan, IFAD's long-standing presence and centralized KM operational manner- facilitated by country programme officers - enabled deep local insights and long-term partnerships. The enhanced knowledge collaboration with multiple stakeholders thus nudged KM practices to a higher level of transformation. On the contrary, countries like Angola and Sierra Leone struggled with high turnover rates among country directors and staff, undermining the retention of institutional memory and sustainable KM partnerships (see Chapter VI.B for further details). Additionally, in countries like Angola, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, where IFAD projects operate under a decentralized model, broad project focus and small teams challenged the consolidated knowledge synthesis at the country level. Finally, some countries, including China, Angola, Mexico, Côte d'Ivoire, and the DRC, tended to have a higher proportion of risky projects in their portfolios. These projects suffered from delayed disbursements, performance issues, or sluggish progress in implementation. As a result, the focus of interaction during implementation and supervision was typically towards resolving these challenges at the expense of more transformative KM practices.
166. **Capacities and incentives of country teams and project staff to engage in KM activities were essential for effective KM practices** (see Chapter VI.A). Many countries lacked full-time KM staff or focal points in the ICOs (e.g., Angola, China, Egypt, Nigeria, Tunisia, Côte D'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone). Countries with full-time KM staff or units, as seen in Vietnam, Pakistan, and Brazil, have shown more evidence-based reporting and the creation of actionable knowledge products (for example National Poverty Graduation Programme [NPGP] in Pakistan). Staff assigned to KM roles had broader responsibilities which diluted their efforts in KM activities (e.g., Egypt, China, Côte D'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone). Furthermore, there was a challenge in systematically capturing, sharing, and leveraging operational and grassroots knowledge from projects. This impacted IFAD's effectiveness as a knowledge provider, due to the limited capacity on packaging field lessons and challenges to inform policy and support scaling up of good practices. The need for capacity training on KM was constantly highlighted in countries such as Angola, Côte D'Ivoire, China, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.
167. **Supervision missions provided an opportunity to address KM challenges and opportunities in a project.** Countries like Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan reported consistent, hands-on KM support during supervision. However, the availability of KM expertise during these IFAD supervision missions varies widely across

countries. For instance, Argentina, and Sierra Leone infrequently incorporate KM specialists into their supervision teams. When KM issues are addressed, they are often handled by M&E or communications specialists as an ancillary task, rather than by full-time KM professionals. Some countries, like Vietnam, Tunisia, and Côte d'Ivoire, have reported receiving high-quality KM support during specific supervision missions, although this support has not been systematically provided.

168. **IFAD country offices were not always able to utilise grants for KM.** The strategic integration of regional grants into country KM initiatives was inconsistent across the countries studied. The QAG discussion paper⁸⁸ on KM in project design noted that many IFAD grant-funded activities are specifically geared towards knowledge generation of interest to individual investment projects, but are not always well-linked in design reports or strategies. In many countries (e.g., Vietnam, Philippines, Kenya, Madagascar, Brazil, Sudan and Nigeria), grants played a major role in supporting KM activities and specific grants were highlighted that enabled knowledge generation, sharing, and capacity building. However, in several countries (e.g., Pakistan, China, Angola, Sierra Leone, Egypt and DRC), there was limited or no evidence of grants specifically targeting KM.
169. **Good examples of grant-funded partnerships supporting effective knowledge management practices were found in Vietnam, Tunisia and Sudan.** In Vietnam, the regional South-South Cooperation for Scaling up Climate Resilient Value Chain Initiatives (SSCVC) grant was impactful for supporting knowledge sharing with Laos, Cambodia and China. In Tunisia, the regional Conservation Agriculture and Crop Livestock Project (CLCA) grant generated valuable knowledge and inter-regional exchanges. In Sudan, the SKiM regional grant strongly supported KM activities through the creation of learning routes highlighting IFAD-supported activities.⁸⁹ This dynamic was aided by a clear process to feed grant knowledge back into loan-funded projects. Nevertheless, while certain grants built on project lessons and best practices to generate new knowledge, this often happened without the knowledge of the country team and was siloed away from opportunities to scale or share the knowledge in other contexts. Awareness of new grant opportunities was also limited in several country programmes, indicating a systemic challenge.

Government capacities for KM

170. **Very few governments had the capacities for KM readily in place.** The Philippines stands out as a positive case. The Philippine government does have the capacities for effective KM, bolstered by well-defined strategies, sufficient funding, strong partnerships, and active engagement in knowledge-sharing activities. Through its collaborations with different government departments and Local Government Units, the Philippines country programme has demonstrated strong government ownership over project implementation, which has enhanced its KM effectiveness. The government's active participation in IFAD-led knowledge-sharing events also signified its capability and willingness to absorb and apply knowledge.
171. **Introducing KM was a challenge in countries that did not have prior experience with the concept.** In many countries there was a confusion between KM and communication functions. Partners in China, Angola, Côte D'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Sierra Leone, often struggled to understand the concept and did not have the capacities in place for effective KM. For example, Angola is still in the nascent to intermediate stages of developing its capacities for effective KM, while Côte d'Ivoire faced challenges due to the relatively recent introduction of formal KM practices. The novelty of KM suggests there is significant room for growth and optimization of KM initiatives within

⁸⁸ IFAD, QAG, 2021, "A discussion paper on the quality at entry of project designs in 2020: country-level policy engagement and knowledge management"

⁸⁹ The SKiM grant also benefited Morocco and Molova and supported knowledge exchange between the three countries.

governments. Moreover, high staff turnover in PMUs and relevant governmental bodies, institutional changes, retirements, and recruitment challenges hindered KM effectiveness in these countries and many PMUs reported the need for capacity-building activities and trainings on KM.

172. **Language barriers were sometimes a barrier for knowledge generation and use.** Interviews, such as the focus group discussion on Subregional KM issues, indicate that language barriers can significantly impede KM effectiveness. IFAD's publications are available in a limited number of languages which do not account for the broad use of others, including local languages, in much of the portfolio. The use of non-local languages in official documentation and communication channels, such as in Kyrgyzstan and Vietnam requires extensive translation. This hinders direct engagement with local communities, data collection, and knowledge dissemination. In francophone Côte d'Ivoire and DRC, the lack of documents and communication in local languages restricts knowledge dissemination and accessibility among beneficiaries. These barriers underscore a need for accessible documents and diversified communication tools in local languages to facilitate more inclusive and efficient knowledge sharing.
173. In fragile situations challenges for effective KM did not fundamentally differ but were even more pronounced. This required a high degree of flexibility and the ability to adapt to a volatile context, as shown in Box 5.

Box 5

KM in fragile situations

In fragile situations, **political and institutional instability** often pushes KM to the periphery, as immediate concerns like security, humanitarian aid, and political stability dominate the discourse. Compounding this is the fragile institutional fabric characterized by **weak coordination** among development partners, **high government staff turnover**, and an **underdeveloped M&E function**. The landscape for knowledge generation is equally challenging, marked by a lack of tools for knowledge collection in local languages, insufficient KM budgets, and scant evidence from projects. The inconsistency in knowledge sharing, stemming from ad-hoc policy engagements and the absence of structured communication platforms, further muddies the waters.

Some of IFAD's practices, like conducting studies for evidence generation, using the M&E system for lesson learning, and leveraging shorter videos and one-pagers for experience sharing, have shown promise. The collaboration with research organizations and the use of digital platforms, including WhatsApp and project websites, are flexible and accessible approaches and the use of social media has been especially crucial in reaching people outside of capitals and maintain communication with field locations. However, these efforts are sporadic and not uniformly effective across all fragile contexts.

The gaps in IFAD's approach are evident. Focus group discussions indicated a clear need for more **dedicated resources** for KM at the project level, both in terms of funding and training. A deeper introspection into IFAD's KM culture is required to better support, with an emphasis on mainstreaming **flexible KM practices**. Strengthening **partnerships** and **focusing on the youth**, especially through social media, can offer new avenues for KM.

Source: CLE FGD

B. Transformative KM practices and contributing factors

Factors supporting transformative KM practices.

174. To understand the contribution of KM to rural transformation, the case studies assessed the factors which influenced the effectiveness and transformational nature of KM practices, including internal KM frameworks, staff capacities and incentives, IFAD's country presence, partnerships, and government capacity. Contextual elements, such as language barriers and grants for KM, also played a role. Table 2 details which countries displayed evidence of these factors either enhancing or hindering KM effectiveness. The table also shows that some countries

(Cluster C and Cluster D) had a larger number of favourable factors supporting the growth of transformative practices.

Table 2
Presence of KM practice types and key factors

<i>Hindering factor</i>					<i>Enabling factor</i>			
Cluster A	Cluster B	Cluster C	Cluster D	Factors	Cluster A	Cluster B	Cluster C	Cluster D
↓	↓	●	●	KM frameworks	●	●	↑	↑
↓	↓	●	●	IFAD presence	●	●	↑	↑
●	●	●	↓	Supervision missions	↑	↑	↑	●
●	↓	↓	●	Grants for KM	↑	↑	↑	↑
●	●	●	●	Government capacities	●	●	↑	●
↓	↓	●	↓	Language	●	●	●	●
↓	↓	↓	↓	Enabling environment	●	●	●	↑
↓	↓	●	●	IFAD leaderships	●	●	↑	↑
↓	↓	●	●	Partnerships	↑	↑	↑	↑

Cluster A: Mix of 1st to 4th generational KM practices (Malawi, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia)

Cluster B: Mainly 3rd and 4th generational KM practices (China, Angola, Mexico, Egypt, DRC, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Côte D'Ivoire)

Cluster C: Balanced KM practices (Philippines, Pakistan, Madagascar)

Cluster D: Mix of 4th to 6th generational KM practices (Vietnam, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Sudan)

Source: CLE synthesis of 20 country case studies

Transformative KM practices in case study countries

175. Many KM practices championed by IFAD, are rooted in inclusivity and stakeholder-centric approaches. In some countries these practices have been raising the bar towards transformational approaches, most notably in Brazil, the Philippines, and Sudan.
176. The case studies found that effective KM was not merely an internal exercise; rather, it acted as a catalyst in collating various forms of knowledge—technical, indigenous, and experiential—to create impact at both the project and country levels. This result bridges IFAD’s strategic goal of championing and elevating perspectives of local stakeholders as well as innovative approaches from outside the organization. This was particularly relevant in Argentina, Brazil, Kenya, and Kyrgyzstan where KM practices incorporated broad reaching connections with multiple divisions, local actors, and external organizations to create high quality and useful products.
177. Beneficiaries actively contributed to knowledge generation through practices such as participatory rural appraisals, beneficiary workshops, and learning routes, as seen in the Philippines, Brazil, and Sudan, which influenced project design and implementation. In Brazil and Kenya, innovative KM tools and approaches were employed, including the utilization of indigenous knowledge and sourcing technical insights from various stakeholders. Moreover, beneficiaries took an active role in co-developing knowledge products such as community action plans, participatory impact assessments, and success stories.

Box 6

Characteristics of transformative KM practices

Fifth and sixth generation KM practices become more transformative through several qualities, notably: **Inclusivity and Participation**, representing diverse interests and voices through participatory methods; **Knowledge Brokerage and Co-creation**, bridging local and external knowledge for forward-looking strategies; **Continuous Learning**, understanding based on practice; **Longer Time Span**, recognizing transformational change as a long-term process; a **Cross-cutting Focus**: understanding that rural transformation intersects various sectors, and; **Systems Thinking and Stakeholder-centered Approaches**, challenging assumptions, understanding historical system contexts, and including stakeholders in decision-making processes.

Source :: CLE elaboration, based on Silici et al, 2022.⁹⁰

178. **Contextual factors, like the media, internet availability and political landscape affected the types and effectiveness of KM practices across countries by how knowledge was shared and with whom.** In countries like Argentina, Brazil, and Peru, democratic systems and open digital spaces foster robust knowledge sharing, which enhances a higher level of transformative KM practices. For instance, Argentina and Brazil have competitive elections, vibrant media, and active civil society organizations. Argentina also has an open and diverse online media environment; the digital ecosystem is populated with initiatives and content that reflect the interests of different groups, including indigenous groups. Peru's laws also support indigenous participation in development projects. These factors ultimately facilitate the engagement of local stakeholders and indigenous groups in KM activities, thus enabling a higher level of rural transformation.
179. In countries where civil society operates in a more centralized manner, citizens experience different, more restricted frameworks for political and civil processes, posing a challenge in curating and brokering different types of knowledge within the country. In China, Vietnam, Sudan, Kyrgyzstan, and Egypt, unique digital landscapes and cultural norms have necessitated alternative platforms for knowledge dissemination with distinct challenges for the continuity and durability of KM. Additionally, a lack of access to public services and state institutions in rural areas (e.g., DRC) can hinder political participation; ethnic-minority and Indigenous groups are often excluded in the political sphere. Inclusion of local and indigenous knowledge is usually difficult in these countries, constraining KM practices from reaching rural transformation.⁹¹
- IFAD leadership on KM at the country level**
180. **Strong ICO leadership incentivised country teams and helped to advance KM to 5th and 6th generation practices.** For instance, in Brazil and Sudan, IFAD country teams showed exemplary leadership by dedicating attention to KM, establishing a well-defined KM structure, and engaging in multi-layered, participatory approaches to knowledge generation and sharing. Brazil country team's focus on regional dialogue, policy engagement, and participatory knowledge cultures distinguished it as a model for effective KM. The IFAD's Vietnam Country Team was also well-equipped to manage knowledge effectively, benefiting from stable staffing and ongoing partnerships. The country and MCO teams in Vietnam also provided KM training to project-level staff, leveraging the

⁹⁰ Silici, L., Knox, J., Rowe, A., Nanthikesan, S. (2022). Evaluating Transformational Adaptation in Smallholder Farming: Insights from an Evidence Review. In: Uitto, J.I., Batra, G. (eds) Transformational Change for People and the Planet. Sustainable Development Goals Series. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78853-7_13;

Lonsdale, K., Pringle, P. & Turner, B. 2015. Transformative adaptation: what it is, why it matters & what is needed. UK Climate Impacts Programme, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

⁹¹ Country data in this section from Freedom House. 2023. <https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores>

corporate KM resource centre and toolkit, and consulting regional KM focal points for input during training and working sessions.

181. In Sudan, the country team has invested in human resources, established effective frameworks for stakeholder engagement, and have focused on continuous improvement and adaptation of their KM strategies. Specifically, there is a centralized KM structure led by the Country Director (CD) based in Khartoum. Furthermore, the Country Programme Officer (CPO) has been taking the focal point role seriously and effectively coordinated the KM agenda. The country's KM efforts are guided by a comprehensive KM strategy which is aligned to the country's centralized political and administrative structures. A multidisciplinary team, involving various stakeholders (such as ICO staff, project staff, and relevant line ministries) functions as a CoP. This group facilitated project-to-project learning, knowledge dissemination, and policy advocacy. The KM team has been open to interested stakeholders, enhancing the quality and reach of KM activities.

Box 7

How IFAD's Philippines Country Team Demonstrated Good Leadership in KM

Long-standing Presence and Commitment to KM: IFAD has been active in the Philippines since 1978, allowing the team to develop deep local insights and partnerships. Senior personnel within the ICO, including a senior advisor, country director, and CPO, are well-versed and dedicated to KM.

Strong KM Culture and regional engagement: There is a strong culture of knowledge sharing, with the entire country team understanding and valuing the role of KM. The Philippines team has also been active in promoting regional approaches, sharing knowledge at the regional MCO in Vietnam.

Effective Human Resources: Despite the lack of a full-time KM staff member, the senior advisor and former CPM function as key focal point, coordinating knowledge sharing efforts while the Country director leverages long-standing government partnerships for KM co-financing.

Role as Knowledge Broker: The ICO acts effectively as a knowledge broker, facilitating platforms for Country Level Policy Engagement (CLPE) and partnership building. Reports such as the 2019 CSPE, COSOP Completion Report, and MTR have acknowledged the significant long-term contributions of the ICO to knowledge brokering. The 2017 COSOP emphasized IFAD's capability to offer global knowledge and best practices. The country team and projects echoed the pivotal role of IFAD's KM support in fostering knowledge generation and sharing.

Successful KM implementation and support to projects: KM in the Philippines is mature and well-embedded, with the ICO playing a pivotal role in brokering knowledge through various platforms. The country team has skillfully used high-level knowledge sharing events to foster connections between project beneficiaries, including indigenous groups and governmental bodies. Projects have also reaped the benefits of interaction with knowledge holders and best practices from other initiatives. Project staff highlighted this support and feel empowered to partake in knowledge creation and sharing.

Source: Country case studies.

KM partnerships

182. **The level of diversification of KM partnerships and types of partners have played a key role in 5th and 6th generation KM practices.** In countries with fewer transformative practices, such as Malawi, Angola, Côte D'Ivoire, DRC, Sierra Leone, China, and Egypt, strategic partnerships for KM were notably limited. These countries faced poor communication, lack of systematic knowledge exchanges. Interactions with UN partners typically focused on operational aspects of projects and joint publications, rather than deepening sustainable and coherent knowledge partnerships. Furthermore, IFAD's implementing partners, possessed underutilized KM capabilities that IFAD could potentially leverage for learning and improvement.

183. **Country portfolios with 5th and 6th generation practices were better in forming multi-stakeholder partnerships for KM, which included beneficiaries, NGOs, and governmental bodies.** For instance, Pakistan effectively harnessed its strong ties with local NGOs to empower community stakeholders, resulting in strong local stakeholder empowerment. In Argentina and Brazil, Research Institutes and UN partners provided valuable knowledge to the country programmes, while civil society organizations played a vital role in generating and using knowledge through strong emphasis on stakeholder engagement. In Vietnam, collaborations with government research organizations enriched policy dialogues and facilitated the assimilation of new insights. Communities of Practice further enhanced knowledge sharing among these diverse partners, providing a venue for rural transformation.

C. Achievements: Creating pathways toward development results

KM practices and results in case study countries

184. The evaluation's theory of change assumed that KM is playing a role in driving the impacts of IFAD's operations, particularly towards three broad development results. The ToC (Annex I) outlines how KM would contribute to both immediate and intermediate KM results and to three broad development results, ultimately contributing to rural transformation. In analysing 20 country-level KM approaches over a multi-year period, the evaluation found that the implementation of moderately and highly transformative practices was most likely to directly contribute to concrete development results. However, a foundational structure of KM understanding and practices at a more basic level was observed in several countries. This suggests a nascent growth of KM infrastructure and underscores the need for a robust support system to foster its progression. With countries falling somewhere along this continuum, this signifies a need for a flexible approach to country-level KM, acknowledging the diverse needs of country programmes, a nuance the current strategy has not demonstrated.
185. Based on the presence of different KM practices and practice types along with evidence of contribution to the development results, the 20 countries can be grouped into four main clusters: (1) Cluster A include countries with a blend of low (LT) and moderately transformative (MT) KM practices, such as Malawi, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, and Tunisia; (2) Cluster B include countries predominantly using moderately transformative (MT) KM approaches, including China, Angola, Mexico, Egypt, DRC, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Côte D'Ivoire; (3) Cluster C include countries like the Philippines, Pakistan, and Madagascar, where KM practices are evenly distributed across different transformative levels; and (4) Cluster D include countries like Vietnam, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, and Sudan, which feature a combination of highly transformative (HT) and moderately transformative (MT) KM practices.
186. Table 3 below shows that **countries with a good mix of KM practices, including 5th and 6th generation KM practices, have achieved longer-term results and made a better contribution to development results, mainly by changing KM behaviours and through enhanced KM partnerships.**

Table 3
Share of countries per group achieving KM results

Different levels of KM results		Cluster A:	Cluster B:	Cluster C:	Cluster D:
		Mix of 1st to 4th generational KM practices <i>Malawi, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia</i>	Mainly 3rd and 4th generational KM practices <i>China, Angola, Mexico, Egypt, DRC, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Côte</i>	Balanced KM practices <i>Philippines, Pakistan, Madagascar</i>	Mix of 4th to 6th generational KM practices <i>Vietnam, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Sudan</i>
		Proportion of countries showing strong evidence for KM results within each cluster :			
Intermediate Results	Improved IFAD knowledge products	100%	50%	100%	100%
	Improved KM skills/capacities of IFAD staff	0%	0%	33%	80%
	Improved KM behaviours of IFAD staff	0%	38%	33%	100%
	Enhanced Knowledge partnerships	25%	13%	33%	100%
	Better design and implementation of programmes	50%	38%	67%	100%
	Enhanced innovation and scaling-up	50%	25%	67%	80%
	Enhanced CLPE	0%	25%	100%	100%
	Improved stakeholder capacities	25%	50%	100%	100%
	Stakeholder empowerment	50%	50%	100%	100%
	Development Results	Improved enabling policy and institutional environment	25%	25%	67%
More effective contribution from IFAD supported interventions		50%	63%	67%	100%
Improved assembling and use of different types of knowledge		50%	50%	100%	100%

Source: CLE synthesis of 20 country case studies

Development Result 1: More effective contributions from IFAD-supported interventions

- 187. **Ultimately, KM has helped IFAD to become more effective in operations in a number of countries.** The most tangible development result outlined in the theory of change is the exploration of how KM practices lead to more effective contributions from IFAD-funded interventions. Pathways toward this result encompass a broad range of activities and practices, with a need for the consideration of KM during each phase of project implementation. For instance, improved KM skills and capacities at project and corporate levels, which entail ensuring conceptual clarity on KM to successfully take up KM activities, objectives and tools, leads to better performing IFAD operations through improved design and programme interventions, thus contributing to more effective IFAD project outcomes.
- 188. This was exemplified in the Nigeria programme where a renewed focus on KM resulted in the first End of the Year Strategic workshop. This allowed IFAD funded projects to share major achievements and challenges encountered within the year, and to discuss solutions. This also gave the ICO the chance to address cross-cutting issues on project functions, such as M&E and internal audit, which has the potential to strengthen overall project performance.
- 189. **Incorporating KM from the first stages of project design allowed country programmes to effectively use lessons from the past.** Evaluations across the portfolio show that capitalizing on lessons learned was particularly instructive in two areas: (a) cross-project learning, especially related to grassroots institution building, women’s empowerment and technology; and (b) introducing innovations to make use of emerging opportunities. Building projects based on lessons learned from previous IFAD-supported projects is an appropriate foundation for sound project planning, and for an increased understanding of the risks involved.

190. The incorporation of previous experiences and KM plans improved project design⁹² in Vietnam, Brazil, and Kenya, where new project designs build on learning from past interventions on specific themes like value chains and rural finance. In most cases, systematic feedback loops to internalize lessons from the wider portfolio and non-lending activities into design were missing and early guidance on KM objectives in project documents was found to be lacking, hindering PMUs in building a comprehensive KM plan.
191. **The suite of KM practices that included information exchange platforms, participatory processes, cross-learning, contributed to more effective interventions and allowed for adaptive management throughout implementation.** Participatory project reviews, regular participatory workshops involving project teams, partners, government and beneficiaries, which were found in 15 of the 20 cases have helped projects adapt plans and promoted a culture of learning and knowledge exchange between stakeholders. Participatory planning workshops and farmer field schools at project level provided important platforms for joint reflection and co-creation of knowledge. Two examples of this can be found in Box 8 below.

Box 8

Examples of cross-project learning related KM practices

In Madagascar, the AROPA project organized an exchange visit for farmers to Nigeria in 2018 to learn about gari processing from cassava, a product not previously produced in the country. The visiting farmers received hands-on training and equipment for gari processing. Back home, AROPA supported the establishment of 30 gari processing plants, successfully introducing this innovation in Madagascar. This experience was later scaled up by the DEFIS project, which established additional processing units leveraging the knowledge gained.

In Brazil, Learning Routes organized by PROCASUR brought together project teams and beneficiaries from different states to exchange best practices on specific themes like goat rearing. Participants visited communities to learn first-hand how they had implemented successful practices. For instance, the Paulo Freire Project and EMBRAPA recently organized a learning route on goats and sheep rearing, building on the knowledge exchange.

Source: Country case studies.

192. **Functioning M&E systems have enabled learning from KM by identifying lessons supported by concrete data systems.** However, in cases where M&E systems are inherently weak, the limited availability of data hampers the effectiveness of KM practices in contributing to adaptive management. ICT tools, such as mobile apps and digital data collection, have enhanced the efficiency of M&E in recent projects (for example in Brazil). Still, challenges remain in data analysis, validation, and its subsequent use for KM, learning and decision-making. There is also an observed gap in linking KM processes systematically to M&E cycles which limits the capitalization of lessons learned (see Chapter IV.A). Case studies found that at the project level, KM and M&E are frequently clustered in the same role, stretching the resources of a single individual or team, and risking the full attention for both areas.⁹³

⁹² According to QAG review, project design often lacks clear guidance on knowledge management strategies, objectives, tools, and processes, which is essential for developing comprehensive and flexible knowledge management plans. The absence of knowledge management ratings at the concept note stage might act as a disincentive for design teams to integrate knowledge management objectives thoroughly from the beginning of the design process.

⁹³ The QAG review of PDRs from 2020 noted that this is not always the case – “There are however some exceptions, and the Kenya Livestock Commercialization Project is one such example. The design put in place a solid and participatory M&E and KM plan from the outset, and at final desk review stage, the design provided a more detailed KM strategy with clearer links to the COSOP and M&E.”

Development Result 2: Improved enabling policy and institutional environment

193. **The CLE found only few cases where KM has contributed an effective policy for rural transformation.** In Kyrgyzstan, a study on changing pasture conditions has supported local Pasture Committees to better govern grazing areas and to prevent both conflict over and degradation of pasture resources.⁹⁴ In countries like Vietnam, Peru, Philippines, and Nigeria, IFAD programmes actively participated in policy discussions through involvement in coordinating bodies, workshops, and direct project-government collaboration. In other countries (e.g., Pakistan, Egypt, Tunisia, and Sierra Leone), limited capacity for policy engagement were noted due to insufficient staffing, high workloads, budget constraints, and inadequate expertise. In Egypt, DRC, and some projects in Cote d'Ivoire, lack of systematic knowledge generation has resulted in limited availability of robust evidence for stakeholder engagement.
194. **Including government and partners in project coordination and knowledge sharing activities leveraged complementary capacities for policy influence** and helped to facilitate scaling up of innovations into national programmes (e.g., working groups in Peru and Nigeria). Including apex organizations, research institutions and civil society also facilitated direct collaboration and inclusive platforms, while also building capacity and buy-in (e.g., Vietnam). Other examples illustrate where country level policy engagement has been supported by strong KM practices (see box 9).

Box 9

Examples of KM platforms supporting country-level policy engagement

The Agricultural Donors Working Group in Nigeria which collaborates closely with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has contributed significantly to the formulation of key policies, such as the agricultural promotion policy, through active input and technical collaboration. The group identifies capacity gaps and technical deficiencies with government specialists and facilitates technical working groups with other development agencies. It fosters trust and shares knowledge, like supporting Nigeria's Livestock Transformation Plan.

Knowledge sharing platforms in Vietnam, such as the Mekong Delta working group and the International Support Group, enable lesson sharing and joint policy engagement. Additionally, the NARDT grant strengthened grassroots research networks on value chain development and climate change adaptation to influence national policies. Site visits and farmer exchanges showcase project results and provide first-hand experience for policymakers.

The PRODESUD-II project in Tunisia developed a policy note on rangeland management that was discussed and validated by different government levels. Innovations were mainstreamed into public policies and taken up by other IFAD projects in regions with similar conditions. Policy notes shared Tunisia's experiences with politicians, the agriculture ministry, and parliament members. Workshops brought stakeholders together to expose project approaches and results.

Source: Country case studies.

195. **The CLE found that multi-stakeholder processes that went beyond individual projects in IFAD's KM practices supported policy engagement.** At regional level, IFAD supported initiatives, like the 2018/2019 Mekong Learning and Knowledge Fairs, brought together diverse stakeholders from across sectors and countries to share knowledge. The REAF engagement in Latin America connected IFAD to a regional platform for policy dialogue on family farming across

⁹⁴ Partnered with the Climate Resilience Cluster of the Earth Observation for Sustainable Development (EO4SD CR), GIZ, and the European Space Agency, IFAD created multiple knowledge products, including a technical note and policy brief on Low Carbon and Resilient Livestock Development in Kyrgyzstan which ultimately supported the government in updating their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).

multiple countries. But, although IFAD has supported some multi-stakeholder processes at regional and national levels, most partnerships and platforms remain confined to individual projects. Participation in external forums was often limited to project staff, with little involvement of beneficiaries. Regional grants and peer learning activities enabled some exchange across countries, but not necessarily multi-stakeholder engagement within countries. There is potential for IFAD country and regional teams to play a greater role in facilitating or promoting these platforms.

196. Strategic use of regional grants supported KM for policy engagement.

IFAD's work with existing regional structures and institutions was usually facilitated through grant support. In LAC, IFAD has used grant projects to generate knowledge, curate local and indigenous knowledge, build the capacities of the organizations of these knowledge holders, and project them to ministers and line agencies. Regional policy engagement in REAF-MERCOSUR and Central American Integration System - Council of Ministers of Agriculture (SICA-CAC) reportedly led to normative and legal changes that improved the country-level enabling environment. IFAD organizational structures in the form of MCOs and platforms, such as REAF and SICA, acting as sub-regional CoPs on family farming were effective as spaces for knowledge exchange on lesson learning and for exchanges between different loan projects.

197. In APR, regional grants have been the main instrument for policy engagement. A good example is Measureable Action for Haze Free Sustainable Land Management in Southeast Asia (MAHFSA). By combining the strategic allocation of relatively low value IFAD country and regional grants with large scale GEF and EU financing and operating as the implementing agency for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and national governments in Indonesia and Malaysia, IFAD has played a role in policy engagement in terms of strengthening national and regional policy and regulatory frameworks to promote sustainable peat land management and fire control over the last decade. In addition to providing technical assistance, IFAD is also promoting knowledge exchange within the region on peatland ecosystems management and is currently extending dissemination to the Congo Basin countries.⁹⁵

198. In WCA and ESA, examples of regional policy engagement are less common. In WCA, the 2019 Youth Agropastoral Entrepreneurship Summit, organized by IFAD in partnership with PROCASUR under the grant YouthTools, resulted in the [Yaoundé Declaration on Youth Agro-Pastoral Entrepreneurship](#).⁹⁶ Also the 2022 Regional Forum on Agricultural and Rural Finance produced a [Declaration of Yaoundé](#) on the related theme, signed by delegates of participating countries and agencies. In ESA, KM policy engagement mainly happened at country level. There were instances of scaling up through lessons learned in ICOs, such as Uganda's oil palm value chain project's success that has also led to policy change on public-private partnerships, and the scaling up of GEWE interventions on household mentors. IFAD's engagement with the AU is a space for regional knowledge sharing and has the potential for regional policy engagement.⁹⁷

199. LAC provided positive examples of KM contributing to policy engagement through SSTC, particularly within regional groups. There is significant room for IFAD to use opportunities in SSTC more systematically to share lessons learned and promote their application in policy development across its portfolio. In Argentina, experiences with rural dialogue platforms inspired by projects in Uruguay were used for policy engagement through the Rural Areas Development

⁹⁵ 'Enhancing the contribution of APR to the CLPE Agenda in the Asia and Pacific Region'

⁹⁶ WCA regional division study kick-off meeting, 24 March 2023.

⁹⁷ For example, IFAD reportedly developed pro-poor value chain guidelines developed by IFAD for the AU. The AU also requested IFAD's technical knowledge and expertise for rural development, though this could not be done due to a lack of budget on IFAD's part.

Programme (PRODEAR) project. Knowledge on semi-arid agriculture generated in Argentina through the DAKI grant is being explored for incorporation into projects in Bolivia and Paraguay.

200. In Mexico, collaboration between IFAD and CEPAL resulted in an online course and platform for social enterprises that could potentially inform policy in other countries. CEPAL's experience in Central America was transferred to Argentina via IFAD for the development of the Relative Rurality Index, though policy influence is still pending. In Peru, IFAD's work with the Group for the Analysis of Development on a model inspired by the Sierra Sur project demonstrates potential for lesson sharing. However, across the case studies, few other examples were found of systematic cross-country lesson learning through SSTC informing national policy engagement

Development Result 3: Assembling and use of different types of knowledge

201. **Meaningful engagement with local knowledge systems enabled appropriate and sustainable solutions.** In Kenya and Peru, participatory processes helped to validate and integrate local knowledge, blend indigenous and scientific systems, exchange grassroots innovations, and scale contextual solutions. Peer-to-peer learning was facilitated through exchange visits and farmer networks. The Commodity Alliance Forum in Nigeria has been particularly effective in bringing forward knowledge from private sector off-takers.
202. In Brazil, KM practices were embedded in a participatory culture, which valued traditional agriculture and local knowledge. The participatory KM approach in Brazil empowered poor rural people, particularly women, youth, and local communities, by ensuring their equitable inclusion in the process of rural transformation. The insights from Quilombola communities,⁹⁸ women, and the youth were amplified through knowledge exchanges and brought the local voice to a global audience; exchanges expanded boundaries and led to the adoption of eco-friendly stoves and solar energy solutions. Beyond their technical contributions, these innovations signified a behavioural change toward climate resilience. The **'Learning Territories' initiative** was another example of the transformative power of KM. Led by young managers, this program recognized and leveraged rural youth talent — from skilled producers to local community members. By translating local knowledge and practical expertise into services and products, 'Learning Territories' established a long-term monetizable KM network and spurred economic independence among the youth. The use of **artificial intelligence** in the initiative for real-time message analysis has also uncovered innovative solutions to rural challenges, forging a modern learning pathway for young farming generations.
203. In the Philippines, KM practices at the country level have been instrumental in shaping a policy environment favourable to rural development. Rural transformation was achieved by empowering the rural poor to participate in policy processes. Central to this transformation was the emphasis on participatory and multi-stakeholder approaches that prioritize local perspectives. The **IFAD Philippines Gender Network (IPGN)** has been instrumental in ensuring that rural projects are gender-sensitive, heralding a shift towards more equitable rural development. The considerations of how to address root causes of major challenges faced by indigenous peoples and their support in participating in the Indigenous Peoples Forum also led to a more culturally attuned decision-making process in the country. Lastly, the expansion of the Knowledge Learning Market and Policy Engagement (KLMPE) to support a multi-stakeholder Agriculture and Rural Development Knowledge and Policy Platform, demonstrated the crucial role of drawing from diverse insights in policy formulation. These practices also played a key role in bolstering civil society, providing marginalized groups with legitimacy

⁹⁸ Quilombola are an ethnic minority of African origin. Their ancestors have escaped from slavery in the 16th century and formed closed communities in very remote locations in Brazil.

and fostering collaborations that have reshaped the country's rural development policy.

204. In Sudan, KM practices, particularly through the **KM Symposiums** and **Learning Routes**, have facilitated the internalizing KM concepts into people's mind-sets and establishing a web of connections from local to global levels. The rural poor reportedly experienced behavioural changes and empowerment. For instance, under the SKiM initiative, KM Symposiums were designed to enhance the KM abilities of key rural institutions and stakeholders in Sudan. By promoting knowledge sharing within Sudan and across regions, both the Symposiums and the SKiM portal have championed the importance of KM across various sectors, irrespective of their KM development stage. This effort has borne fruit in the form of knowledge products that were tailored for a diverse group of stakeholders. This expanded to multiple countries, pulling in a spectrum of participants ranging from IFAD-supported projects to Line Ministries, converging on the shared goals of fostering peer-learning, enriching knowledge dissemination, and deriving actionable plans for IFAD projects. Participants of Learning Routes have turned to qualified IFAD knowledge providers, eliciting heightened attention from state industries, thus translating into more focused policy interventions and augmented governmental resource allocation for rural transformation.
205. **Use of digital solutions and links into national KM systems have enhanced the sustainability of KM practices in some countries.** There are noteworthy examples of sustainability initiatives, such as in Angola, Argentina, and Brazil, where IFAD has taken steps like storing project documents on digital platforms and planning strategically for sustainability through public agency ownership. In Kenya, the focus has been on incorporating KM into national systems and establishing exit plans with government ownership. Similarly, Argentina and Brazil have emphasized strengthening local capacities and partnerships, while in Pakistan, collaboration with academic institutions has been a focus for long-term sustainability. These successes often hinge on partnerships and collaboration networks, promoting local capacity-building, and integrating KM into national institutions.

D. Overall effectiveness of KM practices at country level

206. **The country case studies found variable KM practices focused on 3rd and 4th generation KM.** The CLE found high variability in the effectiveness of KM practices at country level. Effective KM practices were found in all countries covered, most of them focussed on 3rd and 4th generation KM. They were mainly at project level and contributed to the improvement of IFAD-supported operations. More transformative types of KM practices were found in a smaller number of countries. While these KM practices have been part-and-parcel of the IFAD way of working for many years, they were put into place at operational levels through long-standing IFAD presence and well-established partnerships.
207. **KM has enabled IFAD to make more effective contributions in a number of country programmes.** There were fewer cases where the systematic generation and sharing of knowledge has enabled effective policy engagement. In a small number of countries IFAD has used participatory methods to mobilise different types of knowledge for improved policy and institutional frameworks.
208. **At country level, the specific local realities shape the KM landscapes.** Countries where IFAD operates in a decentralized manner tend to have more diverse KM practices occurring at the project level, with limited coordination or strategy from the country program level. Centralized country presences allow for more consolidated country-level KM strategies. Countries where the portfolio faces significant delays, performance issues, or instability see limited progress on non-lending activities like KM. Attention goes to implementation issues rather than knowledge activities. Language barriers can be a considerable constraint to KM in non-English speaking countries.

Box 10

Lessons from CLE country case studies

Strategy: a coherent country-level KM strategy motivates implementing partners to concentrate more on institutional learning. Strategic selection and monitoring of KM products help to ensure impact, replicability, and innovation. Advance planning and professionalizing of KM actions can enhance its quality and effectiveness in documenting practices and lessons. Recording knowledge and lessons from the onset allows for adaptive management and flexible implementation, as well as supporting future programme development.

Local knowledge. The richness of local knowledges requires appropriate tools for cross-learning and knowledge sharing mechanisms. Capturing knowledge and capitalizing on experiences can enhance project performance. Digitalized tools for monitoring and evaluation can help to capture operational knowledge. Knowledge products such as stories from the field and videos can aid knowledge sharing, and the use of social media can make knowledge more accessible.

Collaboration and Partnerships. Knowledge collaboration can mobilise technical expertise, resources capacity building. Robust partnerships with local NGOs are key, especially in unstable situations or when ICO resources are constrained. Practices such as knowledge sharing workshops, monitoring field visits, and community meetings, can enhance project performance and outcomes. Roundtables act as pivotal platforms for capacity building, knowledge sharing, and play an essential role in policy processes at both local and regional levels. The use of digital platforms for knowledge sharing enhances transparency and stakeholder engagement.

Coordination: Coordination is key to avoid knowledge redundancy. Strengthening multi-stakeholder platforms can potentially offset such redundancies. Anchoring IFAD projects in government structures offers benefits such as better coordination with national programs, but IFAD would need to address administrative constraints, such as low flexibility and limited human resources in PMUs.

Capacities. Partnerships that include research institutes, technical services, and civil society organizations, help build capacities and enhance the effectiveness of KM. Capacity building at the PMU level helps integrating KM into the institutional culture. Building and strengthening the knowledge sharing culture at all levels will allow more transformative practices to take place.

M&E: Well-functioning M&E systems can support effective knowledge. Improving the monitoring of KM activities and outcomes raises the quality of analytical work to capitalize on project outcomes for more effective policy engagement. Access to data collection and analysis tools allows projects to better incorporate lessons and develop insight from operations. Monitoring of KM outcomes is crucial to understanding the long-term impacts of knowledge sharing activities.

Policy engagement. Effectively documenting and sharing knowledge from operations supports policy dialogue and scaling up. Knowledge generated by the projects is more likely to be taken up if Government has directly seen the results. Grants to national research organisations can generate relevant knowledge for Government and may be a more efficient mode of funding for KM to allow for a closer impact on country-level outcomes.

In **Upper middle-income countries**, the fast pace towards development necessitates agile adaptation to the needs of governments. KM partnerships with national and regional stakeholders can help IFAD to adapt political and institutional changes.

Sustainability and knowledge retention. Institutionalization of KM in organizations ensures consistent application of KM practices. Over-reliance on individuals for KM practices threatens the sustainability of KM practices. Institutionalizing good practices such as virtual knowledge repositories can help overall sustainability and knowledge retention in the program.

Language is as an important consideration when undertaking KM. Expanding access to corporate knowledge products to languages other than English would broaden access by a greater number and diversity of partners. Creating knowledge resources in local languages would allow projects and partners to benefit from greater access to IFAD's knowledge base.

Source: CLE country case studies

Box 11

How knowledge transforms peoples' lives - Stories from Remote Participatory Video Evaluations (PVE)

Farmer story 1: "From nothing, we became businessmen. The members of our community can acquire the mindset that: 'Yes, everything can be overcome.'" During the COVID-19 pandemic, **Filo Esteban Lizarazo Huaman and his siblings** from Pacobamba, Peru, capitalized on their dairy knowledge to launch a yogurt, flan, and cheese business. Supported by the Pacobamba Ministry and a youth entrepreneur project, they embraced roles in sales, production, and supply chain. Their venture expanded through training, community outreach, and collaboration with the Micro and Small Enterprise Support Service (SEBRAE).

Farmer story 2: "A material thing can be temporary...but knowledge stays with you until your death. Until then, you must keep practicing." **Roberto Palomino Espinoza** from Porvenir Uyrus community, Pampas, Peru, epitomizes the fusion of ancestral wisdom with modern innovation. While the Uyrus community revered traditional farming, young members returning from the city introduced advanced agricultural techniques through workshops and training sessions. This evolution was augmented by the IFAD-funded Sustainable Territorial Development Project. Roberto emphasizes that knowledge, blending the old with the new, is a lasting treasure and key to a thriving future.

Farmer story 3: "I usually say that I've been a farmer since the time I was born, because I am the daughter of a great farmer, and also the granddaughter of a great farmer". Hailing from Piauí, Brazil, **Francisca Gomes Da Silva** witnessed her family transition from traditional crops to cashew cultivation, facing challenges and pests. They tapped into resources from SENAC, SENAI, and EMATERCE, embracing agroecological techniques to boost crop varieties and yields. The 2020 Agroecological Booklet became their knowledge beacon. Francisca champions sustainable farming and refutes misconceptions about collective associations, advocating for community-centric agriculture over mere profit.

Farmer story 4: "Everyone ends up winning and it is really cool." **Goncalves Oliveira** of Fava Community, Piauí, Brazil, belongs to a family with deep beekeeping traditions initiated by his pioneering grandfather. As cotton declined, the community shifted to beekeeping, securing resources from the local church. Goncalves honed his skills through familial observation and hands-on experience, later benefiting from affiliations with cooperatives like COMPAI and CASA APIS, the latter aiding in accessing international markets and introducing advanced methods. Through the Learning Territory of Piauí (TAPI), he engaged in a reciprocal learning experience with Central American peers, sharing and enriching beekeeping practices and narratives.

Source: CLE video pilots

Key findings on the Effectiveness of KM practices at the country level)

- KM has been operating inconsistently across IFAD's global operations and therefore has achieved inconsistent results. The country case studies found **variable KM practices focused on 3rd and 4th generation KM.**
- **KM practices were often effective in their contribution to country programmes,** but there were fewer cases where the systematic generation and sharing of knowledge has enabled effective policy engagement.
- **Fragmented or lagging KM frameworks did not enable effective KM.** KM frameworks that were aligned with COSOP-defined thematic priorities were more likely to be successful, but these were rare.
- Capacities and incentives of country teams and project staff to engage in KM activities were essential for effective KM practices. IFAD country offices were not always able to utilise grants for KM. Good examples of grant-funded partnerships supporting effective knowledge management practices were found in Vietnam, Tunisia and Sudan.
- **Very few governments had the capacities for KM readily in place.** Introducing KM was a challenge in countries that did not have prior experience with the concept. Language barriers were sometimes a barrier for knowledge generation and use.
- Contextual factors, like the media, internet availability and political landscape affected the types and effectiveness of KM practices across countries by how knowledge was shared and with whom.
- **Transformative (5th and 6th generation) practices were supported by strong ICO leadership and multi-stakeholder partnerships for KM, which included beneficiaries, NGOs, and governmental bodies.**
- Use of digital solutions and links into national KM systems have enhanced the sustainability of KM practices in some countries. Inconsistent KM approaches and isolated KM practices had lower prospects for sustainability.
- The suite of KM practices that included information exchange platforms, participatory processes, cross-learning, contributed to more effective interventions and allowed for adaptive management throughout

VI. IFAD resources for KM and their Efficient Use

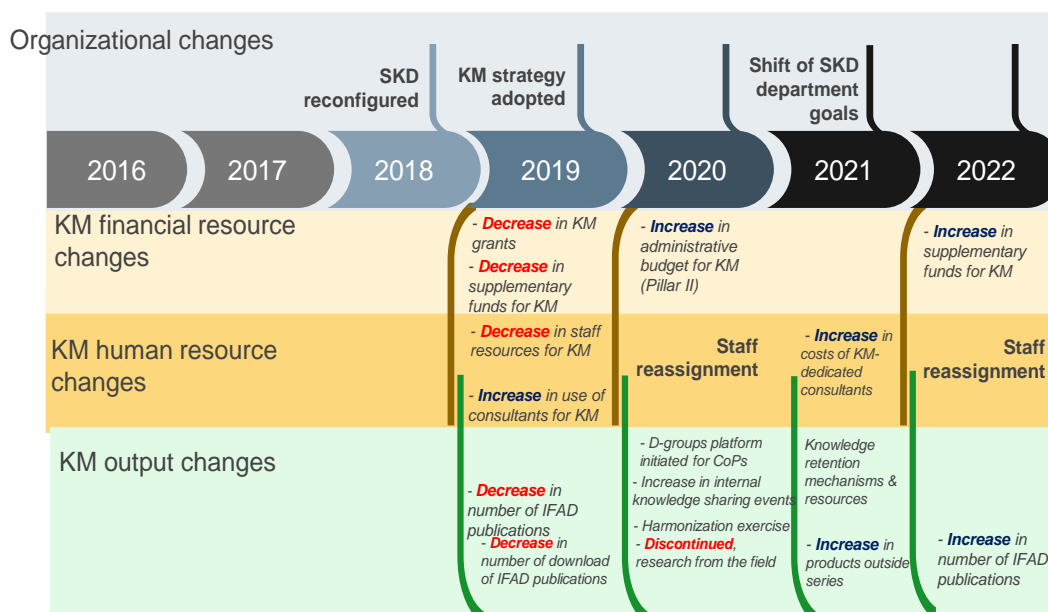
Evaluation question 3: How efficient has the use of the available (financial and human) resources been to deliver the KM practices and results? (Operational and institutional efficiency)

209. The chapter reviews the financial and human resources available for KM and their efficient use for KM products and practices. It probes the hypotheses with regard to appropriate resources to deliver effective KM tools at corporate and country levels. The financial resources include IFAD administrative budget, supplementary funds and grants. It also reviews the availability of full-time staff for KM at HQ, regional and country levels and the capacities to deliver effective KM practices (see Annex V).
210. This chapter therefore examines how KM supports IFAD's efforts to achieve the third of its goals – to be "smarter". The Strategic Framework notes that working smarter means "delivering development results in a cost-effective way that best responds to partner countries' evolving needs". Smarter will also entail the most efficient and effective use of all resources at IFAD's disposal.

A. KM strategy and resources

211. The KM strategy 2019-2025 aimed to be "budget neutral" (not cost neutral), meaning that it intended to use the available resources in a better way for KM. The limitations in budget for KM was highlighted in all conversations with Senior Management during the CLE. The purpose of this section is therefore to highlight areas where resources could be better used or adjusted in order to enhance KM performance.
212. **The review of financial and HR data shows that the adoption of the KM strategy did not lead to an increase in human and financial resources, to match the ambition of the strategy.** On the contrary, IFAD cut the regular grants envelope starting in IFAD 12 (2022) and supplementary funds for KM decreased around the same time the strategy was adopted, as did the staff on full-time KM positions (see Annex V for detailed data). While there was a slight increase in the administrative budget for KM in 2020, supplementary funds for KM did not increase until 2022, following the adoption of the related goals in SKD in 2021 (see Chapter IV.A.). A parallel development was the reduction in the number of publications and the related downloads since 2019. The number of publications increased again in 2022, although the majority of products was now outside the established series.
213. Availability of human resources for KM also needs to be seen in the context of organisational reforms, namely decentralisation and reassignments. The first reassignment exercise in 2020 correlates with the increased use of consultants for KM. Decentralisation has implied posting senior staff from PMD and SKD in country offices, although at different speeds.
214. Figure 8 (below) presents an overview of the main organisational changes that have affected the allocation of resources for KM as well as the changes in KM outputs observed by this CLE. These issues will be discussed in further detail in this section.

Figure 8
Resources for KM in the context of organizational changes



Source: CLE analysis of OBI and HRD data

B. Human Resources for Knowledge Management

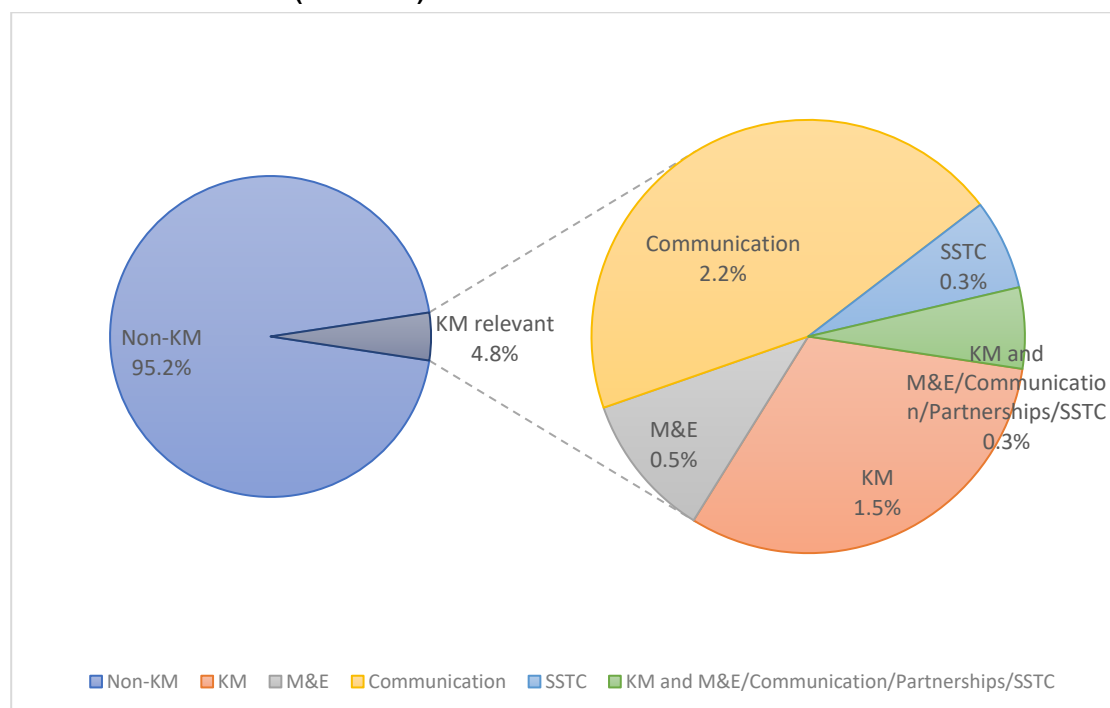
215. The 2019 KM Strategy places people at its core, recognizing that it is the knowledge of its staff and consultants that “ultimately drives the quality of its operations and of the institution overall”.⁹⁹ It also states that the knowledge of its staff and consultants is its most important asset – and can give the organization a competitive edge.
216. Many of the IOE evaluations examined placed emphasis on the importance of human resources for supporting effective KM, especially at the country level. Serving as a baseline, the 2016 ARRI noted that “Aligning human resources and incentives strongly supports the promotion of knowledge management”. However, although evaluations consistently find that full-time KM staff strengthens KM, the evidence is often in relation to generation (more publications and videos) and sharing (more and better platforms) but does not necessarily translate into enhanced use of knowledge.
217. **Staff is the key asset for IFAD and that in all cases reviewed, success depended on the individual motivation and commitment of staff.** At the same time the CLE noted the constraints in human resources as a limitation. High workloads, understaffed country offices, vacant positions and knowledge drain due to reassignment and turnover of staff were recurrent themes. High dependence on junior staff and consultants for KM further undermines the effectiveness and sustainability of KM initiatives.
218. KM also needs to be seen as a process that goes over a longer period of time and brings together various threads of work and engagement. QAG reviews note that KM and CLPE are continuous processes. KM is not a one-off activity to be undertaken during design and implementation, but a set of activities that require constant attention and commitment throughout the project, with dedicated staff time and resources as well as appropriate incentives. CLPE also require constant engagement at different levels for a sustained period of time.

⁹⁹ 2019 KM Strategy, Paragraph 10

Organization-wide human resources

219. **Human resources for KM are inadequate to fulfil the ambitions for the KM strategy.** According to HRD information, there were eight full-time KM officer in 2022, including seven in SKG and one in ERG (COM). Between 2016 and 2022, the annual average cost for IFAD’s personnel on full-time KM positions was approximately US\$ 1.79 million, comprising 1.5 per cent of the overall Human Resources (HR) costs. The review of HR data within this timeframe reveals that 4.8 per cent of the HR costs were related to KM functions. This includes not only those full-time KM positions —i.e. personnel with knowledge and KM related functions explicit in their position descriptions —but also HR costs associated with communication, monitoring & evaluation (M&E), SSTC and positions where KM responsibilities are combined with other functions (see figure 9 below)

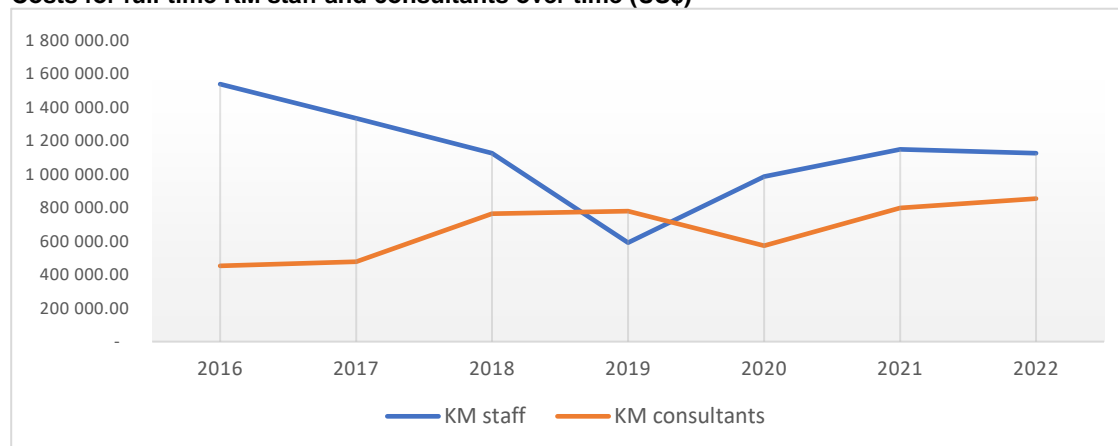
Figure 9
IFAD HR costs overview (2016-2022)



Source: CLE analysis on HR data.

220. **The use of consultants to initiate and sustain KM practices in regional and HQ divisions sets limitations with regard to ownership and integration within the organisation.** The majority of IFAD’s KM personnel are consultants; use of consultant for KM has increased over the period. While the costs for IFAD staff on full-time KM positions have decreased since 2016, the costs for KM consultants have nearly doubled, rising from approximately US\$ 453 thousand in 2016 to US\$ 854 thousand in 2022. The use of consultants for KM increased more significantly in ESA (from two consultants in 2016 to six in 2022) and APR (from three KM consultants in 2016 to seven in 2022) and LAC (from none in 2016 to two in 2022). In NEN and WCA the use of KM consultants decreased over the same period, to one to none in NEN and six to three in WCA.

Figure 10
Costs for full-time KM staff and consultants over time (US\$)



Source: CLE analysis on HR data

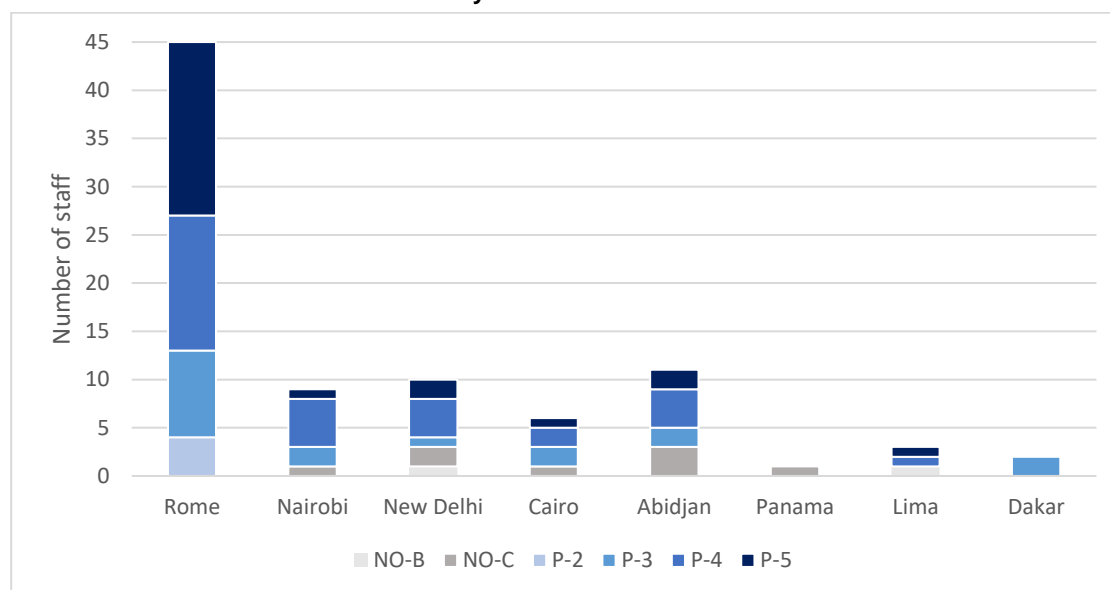
221. **IFAD's staff on full-time KM positions are predominately HQ based, at junior levels and financed from supplementary funds.** Out of the total costs for IFAD's full-time KM personnel (2016-2022), 56 per cent went to SKD and 33 per cent were spent by PMD. IFAD's full-time KM staff were all based in HQ, whereas the majority of KM consultants were home-based or in the field. The full-time KM personnel were often women (67 per cent of the costs). Furthermore, the full-time KM staff positions were usually at junior level. Half of the staff positions (nine over eighteen) financed were at P2 level, followed by five P3 staff and three P4 staff. **Currently, there is no full-time KM specialist at P5 level in IFAD, including SKD, who could supervise and guide KM in the organisation.**
222. **Staff on full-time KM positions are scarce and mostly funded from supplementary funds.** In 2022, the total costs of supplementary funding for full-time KM staff in SKD was approximately US\$2.05 million. These positions are tied to the duration of funding. In PMD there is currently only one IFAD staff position for KM, in the WCA division. KM specialists in LAC and APR are consultants. SKD has a greater number of KM specialists including two KM staff positions based in SKD front office. The majority of SKD staff positions related to KM are in the Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division (PMI) and most are financed by supplementary funds (five staff positions related to KM,¹⁰⁰ four of them funded by supplementary funds). In the Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division (ECG) funding is more diversified. Out of the three positions related to KM,¹⁰¹ two are based in Rome and funded by IFAD, while the Dakar based position is funded from supplementary funds.
223. **Currently, the capacity of SKD to support systematic KM at the country level is limited.** The 2023 CLE on decentralization found that deploying a critical mass of technical staff to provide the required support to ICOs continued to be challenging in many locations and SKD's ability to strengthen non-lending activities in ICOs and promote knowledge management across the organization remained constrained.¹⁰² The review of HR data shows, that the current allocation of SKD staff to MCOs remains insufficient to support effective KM at regional and country levels.

¹⁰⁰ These are KM and M&E Analyst (FO4ACP); KM Analyst (SAFIN); KM Officer (FFR); and one vacant P3 position. (PMI list of staff positions, July 2023)

¹⁰¹ A Knowledge Management Specialist based in Rome; a KM and M&E Officer based in Dakar; and a vacant position advertised in Rome for an Administrative Assistant (ASAP) on KM. (ECD organigram, status July 2023)

¹⁰² CLE Decentralization para 27 page viii

Figure 11
Distribution of SKD technical staff in duty stations



Source: CLE analysis of SKD organigrams (status July 2023)

224. Progress in deploying SKD staff to MCOs has been slow (see Figure 9) and there is a large number of vacancies still to be filled in in large MCOs, such as Abidjan, Dakar and New Delhi.¹⁰³ Furthermore, 17 out of 29 positions (59 per cent) funded by supplementary funds are based in Rome. The majority (72 per cent) of technical leaders (P5) are based in Rome. The Dakar MCO, which traditionally played a leading role in sub-regional KM, only has two P3 positions financed from supplementary funds (vacant at the time of the CLE). Furthermore, mainstreaming themes (ECG) are predominantly Rome-based, while the thematic expertise of PMI is more equally distributed across the regions (see Annex V).
225. **SKD staff with project assignments have little time to support KM, even if they are posted in the region or country.** Within SKD, ECG and PMI staff are leading the bulk of technical knowledge generation around their respective fields. ECG and PMI staff are heavily loaded with project assignments, including design and supervision missions. SKD has 57 technical staff, but only 41 staff have project assignments (72 per cent).¹⁰⁴ SKD experts based in field offices have an equal or even higher workload (12.94 assignments per person on average as compared to 11.95 for HQ-based staff). This means that SKD specialists spend a major share of their time on design and supervision missions and not necessarily in country offices, leaving little time for knowledge sharing. Most of the lesson-learning from operations remains at project level. Furthermore, SKD technical specialists, such as regional and global experts, usually work in more than one region. The majority of SKD staff has project assignments outside their duty stations. This does not support stronger links into the decentralised office structures, an observation also confirmed by the MCO FGDs. Reporting lines also do not support close integration into field offices. Out-posted SKD specialists still report to HQ, not to the regional or country directors.
226. **Project management staff have knowledge management (KM) within their duties.** In most countries KM is only one of the many responsibilities that staff have. The CLE found only very few positive cases with full-time KM specialists or consultants coordinating KM across projects (Philippines, Vietnam), or project teams dedicated to KM (Cote d'Ivoire).

¹⁰³ The analysis based on the review of the updated organisation charts showed that the total number of technical posts available in SKD is 87 (35 in ECG, 46 in PMI and 6 in RIA), of which 57 are filled and the remaining 30 are vacant.

¹⁰⁴ Staff financed from supplementary funds usually do not have project assignments.

227. IFAD country directors, given their authority and credibility, hold pivotal roles in CLPE, which is supported by KM. As the official representatives authorized to make decisions and articulate IFAD's policy stances, their involvement in KM is crucial. Notably, country directors in Vietnam, Philippines, Brazil, and Sudan have successfully instituted robust KM roles and mechanisms. However, many don't adopt this proactive approach because of a general lack of incentives. Senior staff tend to prioritize operations and implementation over KM. Lack of buy-in at senior levels constrains KM progress in many contexts. In several countries, KM activities are the responsibility of junior project staff or assistants. While enthusiastic, they may lack influence or experience to drive KM effectively. This was seen in Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone. KM is often merged with M&E roles across projects and countries. While existing senior staff contend with broad responsibilities, evidence from the PROCASUR grants showcases the impactful potential of senior leadership in KM, leveraging their expertise for more meaningful outcomes.
228. **IFAD country offices rely heavily on consultants to fill gaps in KM expertise due to insufficient staff capacity, which is to be expected given IFAD's business model at country level but comes with risks of knowledge loss when there is insufficient transfer of knowledge to IFAD staff.** The CLE observed this in most of its country case studies, including Argentina, Brazil and Countries offices with full-time KM staff appear more balanced in internal capacity versus external support. Vietnam and Philippines demonstrate strong in-house KM coordination through long-time national staff. DRC attempted to recruit a Knowledge Management officer for retention and dissemination of learning, but the role was not clearly defined. Many projects lacking KM staff depend on M&E officers or intermittent consultants to deliver KM activities, which is not optimal or sustainable.
229. Some country programmes have put in place KM focal points, who may fulfil varying roles in coordinating or supporting KM activities. Vietnam's Country Operations Analyst acts as KM focal point with clear coordination duties with the support of an experienced consultant. The Philippines has a Senior Advisor playing a key role as KM focal point across the portfolio. Kyrgyzstan has recruited a part-time KM consultant specifically to support strategy development and knowledge curation. In Sudan the CPO is playing an effective coordination role within a clearly defined structure. In other cases, the expectations on KM focal points seem less clear. Peru mentions KM focal points in project units but with no details on actual job duties. Argentina has qualified staff, but heavy workloads limit their KM activities. No dedicated KM budget exists. DRC's attempt to recruit a Knowledge Management officer lacked a defined work plan. In several countries, dedicated KM focal points were not identified at the ICO level (Egypt, Madagascar, and Sierra Leone). KM responsibilities often fell to technical specialists or M&E officers.
230. **Supervision budgets are generally tight and often do not allow a specialist for KM to be included.** Therefore, supervision missions often do not provide quality guidance on KM practices. Positive examples exist where skilled KM staffing and strategic partnerships fill gaps (Vietnam, Kyrgyzstan, and Brazil). However, in general, specialized KM human resources are insufficient, pointing to a need for greater prioritization and strategic deployment of KM capacities across levels.

C. Staff Capacities and incentives to engage in KM Knowledge Management capacities

231. **Project level capacities.** Although the country case studies show that project-level know-how on knowledge management and use of KM tools varies significantly across the cases, overall, project-level KM know-how is constrained across many countries by lack of understanding, insufficient skills, and capacity gaps. While pockets of strong expertise exist, this does not appear widespread. Sustained capacity building alongside structured KM resourcing from project outset could significantly improve KM tool use and application.

232. Insufficient understanding of KM concepts and lack of capacity in using KM tools and approaches is a common theme. This is noted in country case studies of DRC, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, and Tunisia among others. Where full-time KM staff exist at project level, they appear to have strong expertise in countries such as Philippines and Madagascar. However, these resources are stretched thin. Reliance on M&E officers for KM activities can be problematic due to differences in skills required and a conflation between M&E and KM was common in the studies. Moreover, several projects lack tailored KM strategies and instead retrofit communications approaches, pointing to capability gaps.
233. **Training and capacity building on KM tools and best practices is frequently recommended, signalling important unmet needs.**¹⁰⁵ There have been efforts to strengthen the capacity of IFAD Staff in KM as set out in recent annual reports on knowledge management. The 2021 report noted that twenty-two IFAD staffers benefited from various KM training products such as the advanced KM courses by Henley Forum and IMA International Knowledge Management and *Writing for online audiences* by Emphasis. These are now being considered by Talent Management Unit in its upskilling and reskilling exercises. A KM capacity-building training programme was also extended to the Dgroups platform and focuses on information exchange between project and IFAD staff. Based on the review of outcome and output indicators, each regional division developed dedicated KM capacity-building initiatives for project management units (PMUs). Three PMUs have been supported in developing project-level KM plans in the Asia and the Pacific region, while planning dedicated KM training for IFAD hub teams and PMUs in 2021.
234. The 2022 KM annual report noted that to bolster the learning culture and produce a better fit-for-purpose workforce, IFAD launched the revamped Operations Academy (OPAC), which offered learning opportunities for staff in operational competencies, technical capacities and cross-cutting skills. A dedicated KM module is also being developed. So far, 8 courses have been launched and 16 are in development. A total of 125 staff from 16 divisions completed 196 courses. The OPAC mentorship programme was launched to offer more effective knowledge-sharing opportunities.
235. The Philippines and Egypt country studies found that appointing full-time KM staff mid-way through projects has helped build expertise, but delays impact the early stages. In the DRC project staff were invited projects to join an online KM course to build their capacity. Positive examples also exist where structured KM units demonstrate strong expertise, like the Team KM approach in Madagascar. But these appear limited.
236. **IFAD staff consulted during the CLE highlighted the limited time they have available for KM.** This limitation was consistently mentioned in CLE interviews, case studies and FGDs. In the CLE KAP Survey¹⁰⁶ 35 per cent of the survey respondents said they practiced KM as daily work. While 90 per cent of respondents agreed that knowledge management was an important part of IFAD's work and 81 per cent of respondents understood how to support and participated in knowledge generation and sharing, 47 per cent of respondents argued that they did not have sufficient time to adequately prioritize knowledge management. Staff time to adequately devote to KM responsibilities and training for staff on KM were highlighted by respondents as top challenges hindering IFAD's performance in knowledge management. Approximately 30 per cent of respondents fulfilled their KM roles during processes such as programme design, project implementation, communications, establishing and maintaining database. On average, respondents

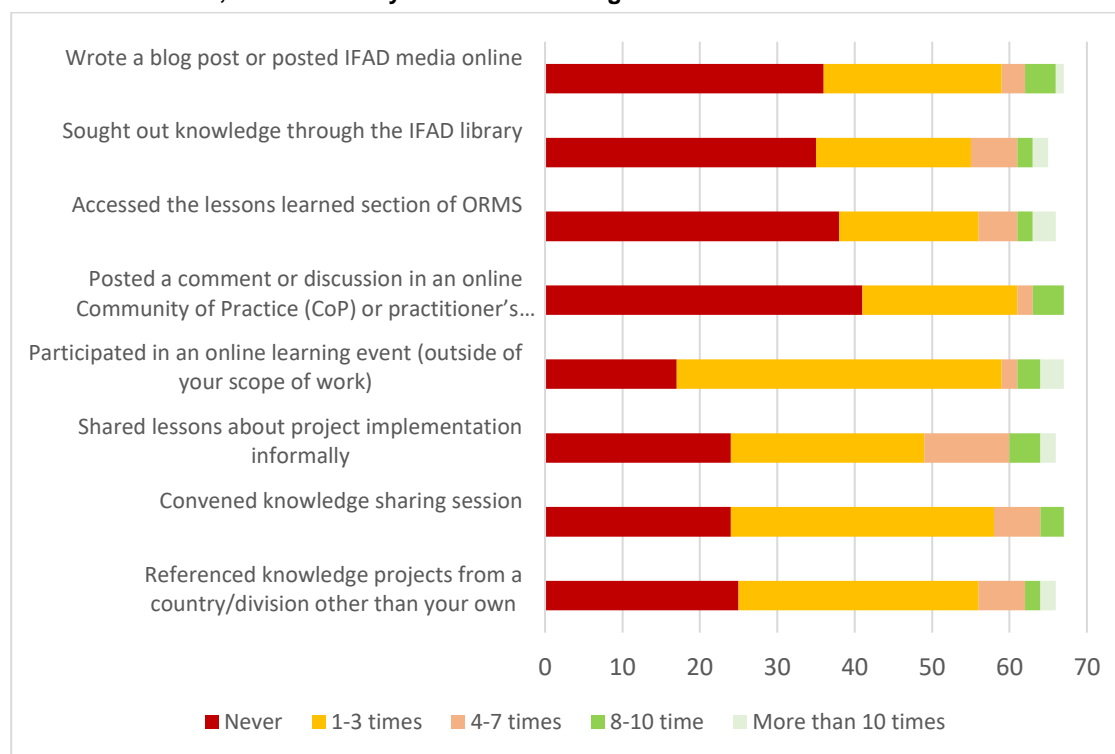
¹⁰⁵ This corresponds with the KAP survey where 76 per cent of the IFAD staff respondents believed that training for staff on KM is weak. (Annex VII)

¹⁰⁶ The KAP Survey received a number of 81 respondents, including 39 per cent Rome-based IFAD staff, 23 per cent Field-based IFAD staff, 20 per cent Rome-based consultants and 14 per cent Field-based consultants. (Annex VII)

dedicated 39 per cent of their time to KM activities; Rome-based respondents spent 30 per cent more time on KM than those are field-based.

237. **The most commonly used KM practices by IFAD staff are peer-to-peer knowledge exchanges, participation in KM trainings and creation of knowledge products.** IFAD personnel are less engaged in collaborative knowledge generation (5th and 6th generational types), including documenting indigenous and local knowledge, often acquired through collaboration with farmers, in formats utilizable during project design phases. Responses to the KAP survey revealed that the main KM practices are people-centric within the organization; informal knowledge sharing among colleagues was most appreciated by IFAD staff and consultants. For instance, many respondents frequently share lessons about project implementation informally (more than 8 times a month), whereas 61 per cent of respondents never posted a comment or discussion in an online Community of Practice (CoP) or practitioner’s forum devoted to their fields (see figure 12 below). The most favoured channel for searching knowledge was through IFAD colleagues or peers, accounting for 23 per cent of all knowledge sources.

Figure 12
In a normal month, how often do you do the following activities?



Source: CLE KAP survey

Staff Incentives to engage in KM

238. The 2014 KM Framework stated the vision that “IFAD integrates knowledge sharing and learning functions into key business processes and provides appropriate incentives to help drive a culture of sharing, innovation and application of knowledge and learning.” IFAD still has some way to go to achieve this vision. The MTR noted the lack of adequate incentives for KM and a need to re-assess incentives for knowledge, both recognition (e.g., awards) and ‘built-in’ measures (e.g. KPIs in Performance evaluation system), as well as goal setting for curation, synthesis, generation and use.
239. **KM engagement relies on personal motivation more than institutional drivers.** Providing adequate incentives will require KM objectives and responsibilities in staff performance reviews; public recognition rewards for contributions to KM; opportunities for career advancement linked to KM expertise,

and; shared learning forums for teams to motivate knowledge exchange. With KM visibility, appreciation, and benefits enhanced, country and project teams are likely to become more proactively engaged in managing knowledge.

240. The country case studies found limited or unclear incentives for ICO and project staff to engage in knowledge management activities in most cases. No financial or career incentives explicitly linked to KM performance were mentioned for individuals or teams. Heavy workloads, lack of time allocation,¹⁰⁷ and competing priorities were cited frequently as disincentives to focus on KM. This was noted in Argentina, Peru, Egypt and elsewhere.
241. **Continuity of national staff in country offices has been a positive force for more effective KM.** The CLE country case studies found that as staff remains in the same country-based role over time, there is greater capacity and motivation to engage in KM. In the Philippines and Vietnam, consistent staffing provides continuity in KM focus, and the team actively champions KM initiatives. Peer learning and interactions reinforce KM's value in Brazil and a sense of personal commitment helps some KM specialists persevere despite limited structural incentives (Cote d'Ivoire). In other cases, the dispersal of country teams due to decentralization has reportedly reduced collaboration opportunities and the motivation for knowledge sharing (Peru, Mexico). Changes in project or country leadership also disrupted incentives and momentum for KM promotion.

Knowledge retention

242. **The Annual Reports on the Knowledge Management Action Plan included in the RIDE (2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023) have consistently highlighted knowledge retention as a key challenge.** Strengthening knowledge retention was part of the enabling environment action area of the 2019 KM strategy and two activities were developed in the Action Plan (3.4.1 and 3.4.2).¹⁰⁸ Since 2021, IFAD had put into place mechanisms and resources to facilitate knowledge-retention and on-boarding of re-assigned or new staff, including handover clinics and handover notes. The knowledge retention process underlines the importance of individual responsibility and the opportunity provided to leave a recognized legacy. In addition, a series of handover clinics for retirees and reassigned staff was organized to explain the handover note.¹⁰⁹ IFAD also established a dedicated website for material supporting knowledge retention.¹¹⁰ Most importantly for sustainability, the 2022 RIDE notes that efforts are being made to systematically embed knowledge retention in human resources processes.
243. **Decentralisation and massive reassignment of staff during the period from 2020 to 2023 had major implication for managing knowledge retention** and led to the discontinuation of KM practices and loss of institutional memory and which in turn created a need to reinvest in local relationships and networks. Newly recruited staff had to undergo a steep learning curve and required, though did not always receive, significant on-boarding. The arrival of new and highly motivated staff has been an opportunity, but it will require time for them to grow into their roles and acquire similar levels of experience and the knowledge within the context of their work. The CLE country case studies consistently noted the disruptions in knowledge management caused by the reassignments.

¹⁰⁷ This corresponds with the findings from the KAP survey where 73 per cent of the 81 IFAD staff respondents believed that staff time to adequately devote to KM was weak. (Annex VII)

¹⁰⁸ There has been no reporting on progress with these activities in the RIDEs but the ARKM 2023 para 25 notes that "Several divisions carried out KR activities and organized 10 conversations: among them, the technical specialist memoir event for four long-serving technical experts, and the words of wisdom with CDs session for five outgoing country directors in APR."

¹⁰⁹ The 2022 RIDE reported a number of further activities in this area including six knowledge retention clinics where staff were trained in structured knowledge retention processes with facilitated conversations and standardized handover notes. Ten formal knowledge retention conversations were held for outgoing IFAD staff to pass their knowledge on to their successors.

¹¹⁰ <https://xdesk.ifad.org/sites/kr/SitePages/Home.aspx>

244. **The evaluation noted the absence of systematic plans for capturing and transferring tacit knowledge before staff departure in most country case studies.** High turnover of key staff, especially Country Directors, has led to loss of tacit knowledge and institutional memory in several countries including Argentina, Sierra Leone, Egypt, and Nigeria. There were no effective plans to retain tacit knowledge and no robust knowledge retention strategies to capture and transfer knowledge from departing staff. Effective approaches to retaining tacit knowledge against staffing changes have not been prioritized or budgeted for in many countries. Positive examples show structures and strategies can be implemented to promote knowledge retention despite turnover. For example, in Egypt the country case study found that documenting handover processes facilitates transition of knowledge to new staff at country and project levels. Moreover, consistent involvement of technical specialists in supervision missions allows for knowledge transfer to PMUs despite changes in country presence.
245. Focus group discussions were held with retirees and youth on the issue of knowledge retention and the results summarized in Box 11.

Box 12

Focus Group Discussion with Retirees and Youth

With their long-standing knowledge of IFAD, the retirees sketched the image of an institution in which learning is taking second place to bureaucratic control of processes and systems. The younger members of staff show the reverse coin of this image in which they struggle to understand processes and procedures - and the internal systems for knowledge sharing - while not always receiving the support and access to the tacit knowledge of more experienced staff which would help them.

Neither group felt that their knowledge was valued: the younger members of staff did not feel that young talent was valued, while the retirees would have welcomed more contact with current members of staff to continue to share their long-standing experiences and insights. While the knowledge of retirees has been lost to IFAD, many younger members of staff are also leaving because of the short-term and intermittent contracts. In addition, there are also no apparent systematic efforts to tap into the knowledge and expertise of consultants who often have unique field-level knowledge. Finally, both retirees and younger members of staff expressed the view that the current processes might mean that the institution is less able to learn from failure.

Source: CLE Focus Group Discussions.

D. Funding for Knowledge Management

246. The 2016 ARRI flagged that more attention is needed to providing resources commensurate with the knowledge management strategy. It noted that since there is no institution-wide allocation for knowledge management it has to compete with other priorities, so that funding is uncertain. It also noted that this means that it is difficult to know how much is being spent on knowledge management or whether the spending is justified by the results. The ARRI 2016 identified a potential conflict between two interrelated challenges: (a) KM activities are often seen as supplementary rather than essential components of projects and programs, and (b) there's a lack of dedicated resources for KM.
247. The ARIE 2022 identified "securing financing of knowledge management either via grant or as a project component (loan)" as one of the factors for successful KM. More specifically, it also suggests that "earmarking financial resources, such as grant financing or specific loan components, to support capacity development in knowledge management activities" is a key success factor. Alternatively, it identified "failure to allocate adequate resources (i.e. lack of specific budget allocations or full-time KM staff in projects and in IFAD country offices)" as a key constraint to KM.
255. KM funding sources are diverse in general. Loan-based KM financing is often restricted due to governmental preferences for tangible interventions and

occasional legislative constraints. Tracking KM expenditures in loan projects is complicated by inconsistent data from IFAD's OBI/ODC systems. Although grants once prominently positioned IFAD in KM, their allocations have notably decreased. For instance, CSPE Indonesia reported a 50 per cent drop in KM and policy funding from 2013 to 2021. Yet, supplementary KM funding has surged since 2019. The adoption of Reimbursable Technical Assistance remains minimal given the organization's experience with RTAs has been "mixed" and only "partially successful".¹¹¹

KM Funding under IFAD administrative budget (Pillar II)

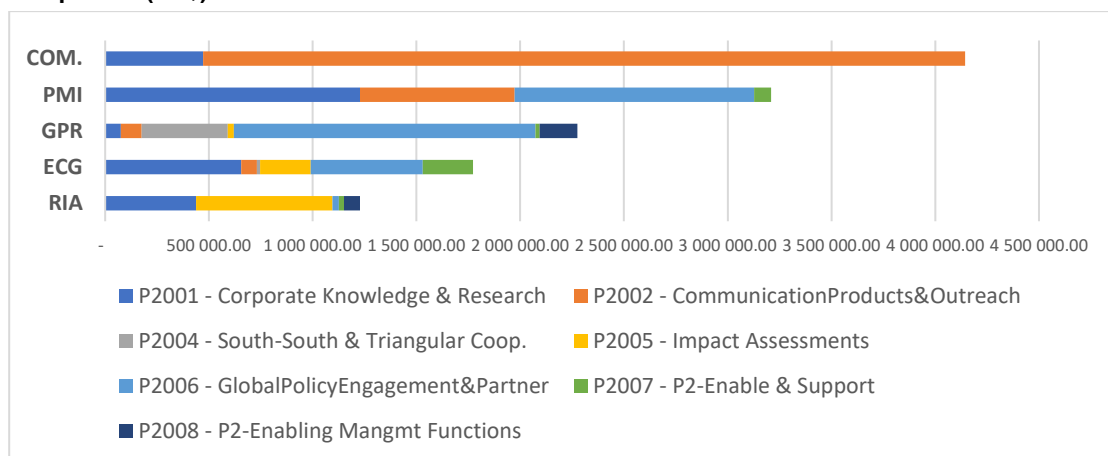
256. **IFAD's administrative budget includes a budget for KM under Pillar II.** Since 2018, IFAD has integrated the Institutional Output Groups (IOGs) approach into its administrative budgeting process. This CLE particularly examined Pillar II, 'Knowledge Building, Dissemination, and Policy Engagement' out of the four results pillars contributed by IOGs. Outputs under Pillar II focus on amplifying global or corporate knowledge and enhancing IFAD's visibility in its field of work. They also emphasize the scaling-up of best practices and innovative solutions. These outputs play a crucial role in strengthening the capacity to learn, generate, and disseminate lessons and innovations related to rural development, including policy engagement at global level.¹¹²
257. In general, the majority of the budget for Pillar II is directed towards P2002 - Communication, Visibility, and Outreach, accounting for 24 per cent of the total Pillar II budget, whereas the minimal portion is allotted to P2003 - Knowledge Promotion and P2004 - SSTC. Between 2018 and 2021, the share of the administrative budget allocated to Pillar II slightly increased from 11.03 per cent to 12.36 per cent of total administrative budget. The largest part of this increase was attributed to the increased budget for P2002 Communication, Visibility and Outreach, which directly support IFAD's communications, visibility, and outreach to external audiences, including communication products, tools, and events that promote IFAD's brand (see figure 21 in Annex V).
258. **The departmental budgets under Pillar II show great variation.** In 2021, departments with highest Pillar II budget were SKD (US\$7.05 million), primarily invested in corporate knowledge and research; ERG (US\$7 million), predominantly focused on communication and outreach, and PMD (US\$3.25 million). Among various divisions, COM showed the largest amount of Pillar II budget (US\$4.13 million), followed by PMI (US\$3.21 million) and GPR (US\$2.27 million).
259. The CLE has discerned a substantial ambiguity in the methodologies employed for the allocation of Pillar II budget among the five regional divisions within PMD. LAC allocated the largest share of its divisional administrative budget to Pillar II, accounting for 9 per cent of total divisional budget, whereas WCA allocated the least of its administrative budget to Pillar II, accounting for only 2 per cent of total divisional budget. APR, LAC, and NEN primarily allocated their Pillar II budget to Communication Products & Outreach. In contrast, ESA focused more on Global Policy and Partnership and SSTC, and WCA primarily invested in enabling management and support (see figure 24 in Annex VI). Further, when analysing expense types under Pillar II among the five regional divisions, APR allocated the largest portion of its budget to staff costs, while ESA allocated the most to travel costs and consultancy services. Overall, the varied approaches to allocating the Pillar II budget among the five regional divisions suggest a potential need for

¹¹¹ The QAG review on RTAs highlighted several key challenges, including (i) the eligibility of the country; (ii) the potential risk on IFAD's reputation regarding its expertise and knowledge for the foreseen investments under the RTA; (iii) the availability of human and financial resources to guarantee seamless execution of RTA-related activities, which is crucial as IFAD's country and technical teams frequently face challenges in meeting RTA demands due to the vastness of their traditional lending portfolio; and (iv) the unclear role of the lead division for IFAD RTA.

¹¹² IFAD. 2018. Institutional Output Groups (IOGs) Reference Guide for 2019.

enhanced uniformity and standardized procedures to ensure efficient resource mobilization for knowledge management within the department.

Figure 13
Top 5 Division with highest share of Pillar II budget vs. total corporate budget (2021) by component (US\$)



Source: CLE analysis on data provided by Office of Strategic Budgeting (OSB)

Supplementary funds

260. **Supplementary funds were an important source of funding for KM.** IFAD has received a total amount of US\$43.84 million as supplementary funds tagged for KM over the period 2016-2023. The main beneficiaries were PMI (US\$25.79 million), GPR (US\$13.3 million) and ECG (US\$3.7 million). Within the IFAD divisions, GPR managed the highest number of KM supplementary fund agreements (19 agreements). The supplementary funds for the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD),¹¹³ managed by GPR, made up 52 per cent of all KM-themed supplementary fund donor agreements. Furthermore, the Global Programme for Small-scale Agroecology Producers and Sustainable Food Systems Transformation, managed by PMI, represented the largest funding amount, accounting for 58 per cent of total amount of KM-themed supplementary funds. Following this, the China-IFAD South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) Facility held the second-largest supplementary funding amount for KM.
261. From 2016 to 2023, there was a notable increase in the share of supplementary funds relevant to Knowledge Management, growing from 0 per cent to 10.92 per cent of total supplementary funds. The peak of KM supplementary fund agreements was reached in 2020 with 9 agreements, which then decreased to five by 2023. Over the review period, the top four donors or member states contributing to KM-themed supplementary funds were the European Commission, China, Belgium, and the Visa Foundation (see Table 4 below).

¹¹³ The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD) is a network of 41 bilateral and multilateral donors, international financial institutions, intergovernmental organizations, foundations, and development agencies. The Platform has three strategic objectives: 1) Strategic influencing 2) Knowledge sharing 3) Networking and convening.

Table 4
Top Five donors supplementary funds labelled with the theme of KM (2016-2023)

Donors/member states	Sum of Donor Agreement Amount (US\$)
European Commission	20 147 080
China	10 000 000
Belgium	5 474 750
Visa Foundation	3 500 000
Italy	1 426 173

Source: CLE analysis on OBI data

Grants for knowledge management

262. **Grants have been a major source of funding for KM in IFAD.** IFAD's review of 52 grants to five major grantees in 2017-18 noted that its capacity to provide a continued flow of grants to support research and knowledge institutions in the rural development sector, placed IFAD as a significant knowledge partner. There is no recent independent evaluation of IFAD's grants programme. The last IOE's corporate level evaluation (CLE) on grants was completed in 2014. Other reports such as the 2019 MOPAN and the 2013 corporate level evaluation on institutional efficiency, included analysis of the grant instrument from their respective points of view. These assessments highlight the usefulness of grants to advance IFAD's mandate, for instance, by strengthening government capacities to implement IFAD-funded projects, and by funding research and innovation. Grants have also been instrumental to policy engagement, establishing partnerships and provide rapid response to crisis situations.
263. A review of the grant's portfolio by IFAD (QAG, 2020) and the grant recipient reports commissioned by IFAD between 2017 and 2018 on five major grant recipient organizations¹¹⁴, provide several supporting examples of grants in each of these areas. These findings illustrate that overall grants play a significant knowledge management role, in that they contribute to primary knowledge production, building capacities in support of project implementation, and promote sharing of lessons. At the regional level, there is a more mixed picture. Grants in LAC clearly placed IFAD as an important player in the regional policy debates (LAC Regional Case Study). A series of regional grants to regional bodies such as MERCOSUR have enabled IFAD to enter the regional policy debates by providing funding for learning oriented studies and knowledge products. The same has not occurred clearly in other regions, as per the CLE's regional case studies.
264. The reduction in financial resources for regular grants, the revised procedure for grant allocations and the shift in objectives of the grant policy have led to declining opportunities for using grants for knowledge management. The amount allocated to regular grants has declined sharply in IFAD 12, compared to previous cycles, with a significant impact on the use of grants for knowledge management. In the IFAD 11 cycle, regular grants consisted of 6.5 per cent of the IFAD programme of loans and grants, resulting in an actual allocation of US\$ 190 million. In IFAD 12, the amount allocated to grants was substantially reduced and capped at US\$ 75 million¹¹⁵ and the grant application and reporting process was revised.
265. In addition, the 2021 corporate grant policy aimed at integrating grants more closely with IFAD projects and strengthening the quality assurance mechanisms. But this resulted in a heavier proposal and approval process for IFAD divisions submitting grant proposals, which now must go through QAG's review process, similarly to IFAD loans. Also, proposals for country specific grants can come only from IFAD country teams, stretching their limited human resources which are

¹¹⁴ CIAT, ICARDA, ICRAF, IFPRI and PROCASUR

¹¹⁵ GC 44/L.6/Rev.1, and revised replenishment assumptions in EB 2021/133/R.13

primarily focused on programme delivery. In addition, the centralization of grant allocations and a competitive application process, means that IFAD divisions face a decreasing likelihood of their grant proposals being approved. Finally, the new grants policy of 2021 identified two strategic objectives for regular grants, namely (1) leveraging impact on the ground for IFAD's programme of work; and (2) foster a more conducive policy and investment environment for smallholder agriculture and rural development.

266. This reflected a desire to re-align the use of regular grants more strictly towards programme delivery, thereby **reducing the scope for 5th and 6th generation knowledge practices, which focused on supporting collaborative research and innovation**. The combination of all these factors has initiated a trend of decreasing interest and time of IFAD divisions and country offices to prepare grant proposals, which is likely to negatively impact grants' previously strong role in knowledge management. As a mitigating action, technical divisions are increasingly seeking to mobilize grant funds from supplementary (external) resources, which however, do not allow IFAD the same degree of freedom to design grant activities, as they need to negotiate these with the donor agency.
267. Despite their positive contribution to KM, the knowledge generated through grants has not been sufficiently managed and capitalized. This was due to weak monitoring and reporting on grants and the lack of a well-organized document repository. The new grant policy of 2021 aimed to address this issue by establishing a portfolio-level monitoring of grant activities by the Quality Assurance Group (QAG), however the issue of storage and organization of documents remains an issue. While many IFAD regular grant-funded operations are specifically geared towards knowledge generation, more can be done to systematically and explicitly mine and utilise grant outcomes to inform project design. Design reports do not often mention linkages between ongoing sub-regional or global grants that focus on knowledge generation on specific themes, which could be beneficially to individual IFAD-financed projects.
268. In fact, grants that were strongly linked to IFAD projects (loans) could leverage project resources for supervision and monitoring, which ensured a more direct uptake of its knowledge products into IFAD projects. For example, the grant to the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) (2000001302) leveraged ICRAF's expertise in land degradation to inform the design of several IFAD projects addressing land degradation in the East and Southern Africa Region. Similarly, the grant to the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) (2000001996) was designed with a clear intention to link to IFAD funded value chain projects, which strengthens its relevance and effectiveness. Since grants don't have allocated funds for supervision, the linkage to the project ensured that supervision missions for the projects could also extend their monitoring to the grantee's performance, ensuring a greater likelihood of effective implementation. Furthermore, the linkage of the grant to projects ensured strong government buy-in.

Regional level resources for KM

269. **An examination of the regional divisions indicated an uneven distribution of financial and human resources, with some better equipped than others but all facing distinct challenges**. For instance, **APR** boasted a dedicated KM team in 2020 and 2021, albeit small in size, with financial resources seemingly piecemeal, relying primarily on the regional budget and grants. This setup sufficed for elementary KM duties but fell short when aiming for more substantial KM results, which require a steady budget stream. Similarly, **NEN** is navigating a declining grant portfolio, placing its non-lending, policy engagement initiatives at risk. These financial constraints, coupled with an absence of a dedicated KM framework have resulted in an unsustainable, though at times positively impactful, KM approach driven by a handful of grants. **ESA's** situation was particularly stark, with palpable constraints in staffing and funding, signalling a need for greater

dedication to their KM endeavours. While indicating budgets in its KM action plans, ESA often grappled with the uncertainty of these funds being realized. Moreover, their grants have been frequently disconnected from their core KM strategy. The **LAC** region presented a varied picture: While units like the SSTC&KC centre in Brasilia have the necessary KM expertise, others, such as the Panama MCO, are stretched thinly in resources. Their financial strategy for KM, primarily fuelled by regional grants, was effective but presented uncertainties for future activities due to reliance on savings. Lastly, **WCA** grappled with significant constraints in both personnel and budget. Extended vacancies in key KM roles and an ambiguous budgetary outline have hindered the consistent rollout of their KM initiatives and point the absence of committed financial allocation to KM. In essence, for the regional divisions to thrive in their KM capacities, there's an evident need for a more structured and sustainable resource allocation strategy.

270. **At country level KM is grossly under-resourced and relies on ad-hoc measures to plug in funding gaps.** In 2017-18, IFAD's assessment of 52 grants given to five primary beneficiaries underscored its consistent funding ability for research and knowledge institutions within the rural development sector, establishing itself as an integral knowledge collaborator. Beyond this grant-focused approach, IFAD's country teams tapped into other internal funds, like regional budgets and project savings, to support KM activities. Nonetheless, in several evaluated countries, there was a notable gap or absence of systematic endeavours to secure additional financial resources for KM outside of these grants, with a prevailing reliance on individual project allocations. This suggests that, despite some countries taking proactive steps to seek alternative funding, there's a broader opportunity to enhance financial diversification for KM at the country level. A concerted effort to consistently source funds from a range of channels could significantly elevate KM initiatives.

E. The cost effectiveness of knowledge products and practices

Cost effectiveness of knowledge products

271. **Cost effectiveness of knowledge products is not analysed in IFAD, which poses the risk of an inefficient allocation of resources.** The reformulated results measurement framework of the KM Strategy, following the strategy's mid-term review, makes adjustments to indicators of knowledge products quality and use, however these are not analysed in relation to the costs of the products. Downloads and citations are the main indicators of use of knowledge products, however, studies WB and ADB illustrate how these are ineffective at tracking use. Knowledge products are a major investment, for instance the WB was found to invest 25 per cent of its country services budget in knowledge products, with limited research on their impact. Furthermore, over 31 per cent were never downloaded, and almost 87 per cent received no citations.¹¹⁶ Accurate monitoring systems are challenging to establish, for instance, knowledge products used internally (e.g., for project design) are usually not cited, therefore underestimating their use. In its analysis of its knowledge products, the ADB identified a number of challenges relating to their effectiveness, their classification systems, lack of clear definitions, time constraints for staff members using the knowledge products, and lack of definitions of what they are.¹¹⁷
272. **The CLE used a qualitative approach for estimating the average costs of IFAD's key knowledge products.** The team conducted interviews with key resource persons to obtain the average cost for IFAD's knowledge products.¹¹⁸ It then crossed these with the average number of views on IFAD's website these

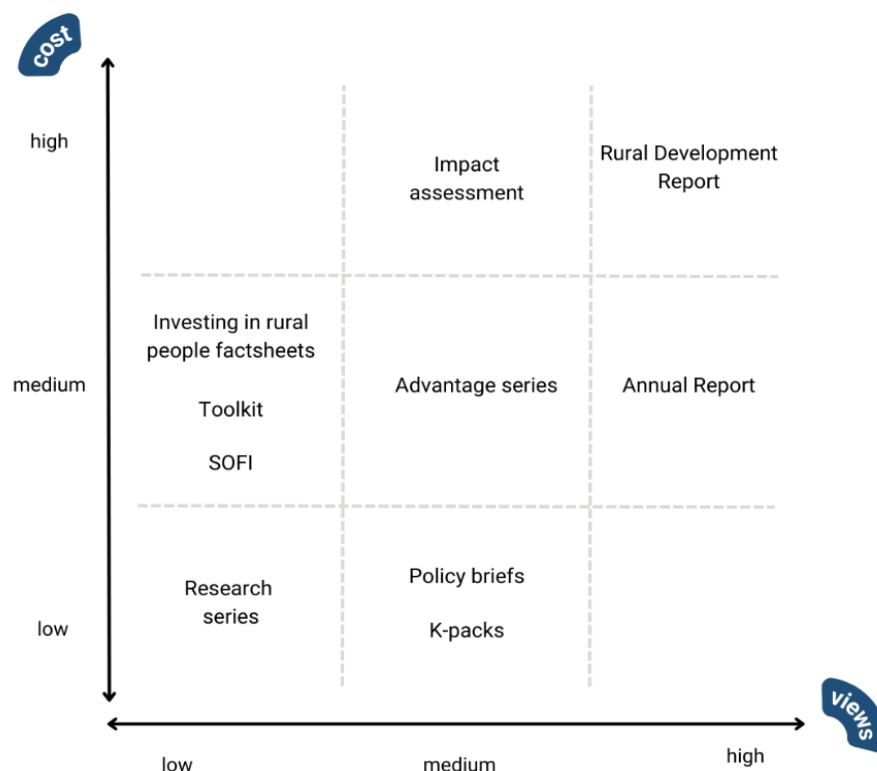
¹¹⁶ Doemeland, D. & Trevino, J. (2014) Which World Bank Reports Are Widely Read? Policy Research Working Paper 6851, Washington DC: World Bank.

¹¹⁷ ADB (2012) Knowledge Products and Services: Building a Stronger Knowledge Institution. Manila. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/evaluation-document/35981/files/ses-kps.pdf>

¹¹⁸ Tables with estimated cost data included in Annex III

products had in the period 2016-2022.¹¹⁹ Both views and costs were organized into three groups (low, medium and high) based on the range of costs and views obtained from the data, and plotted in figure 12 below.¹²⁰ The review shows that policy briefs and advantage series were among the low and medium cost products which had good outreach. Impact assessments are more costly because they require primary data collection. The Rural Development Report has the highest costs, but also high outreach. **The review also shows that IFAD is short of relevant knowledge products that can be produced at reasonable costs.** The k-packs are a low-cost product, but their effectiveness cannot be ascertained yet.¹²¹

Figure 14
Costs and views plot of selected IFAD knowledge products



Source: CLE analysis based on views data from ICT and cost data from CLE interviews

273. **Harmonization of knowledge products, including publishing in limited series, offers inherent advantages in terms of cost-efficiency.** The MTR noted that there has been progress on the process of harmonization and there appear to be CANVA formats – for creating publications - available online. Interviews by the CLE, however, indicate that this process has stalled. The analysis of the series and individual publications indicates that the harmonization exercise is not only stalling but going in reverse; there is evidence of de-harmonization. In the period 2016-2019, the majority of publications were part of series. For example, in 2016, some 88 per cent of publications were part of a series while in 2017-2019 the number was roughly 82 per cent each year. By 2020, the number of publications in series was roughly half (53 per cent) but in 2021 and 2022 non-

¹¹⁹ The analysis used the total number of views of each publication in the period 2016-2022 (not per year). It then created averages for each series, therefore averaging the views of each product within each series. The series-level averages were then used to produce the figure.

¹²⁰ The data on the SOFI only takes in account views through the IFAD website, and is therefore likely to be underestimated, as this report is available through website of the other co-author agencies (FAO, UNICEF, WFP, WHO), who have not provided their download data in a timely manner and could not be included in this report.

¹²¹ K-packs show the promise, though the only case out of the 4 developed in LAC that had gone through QAGreview at the time of this CLE showed poorer ratings in QAG design ratings compared to annual averages in other LAC project designs.

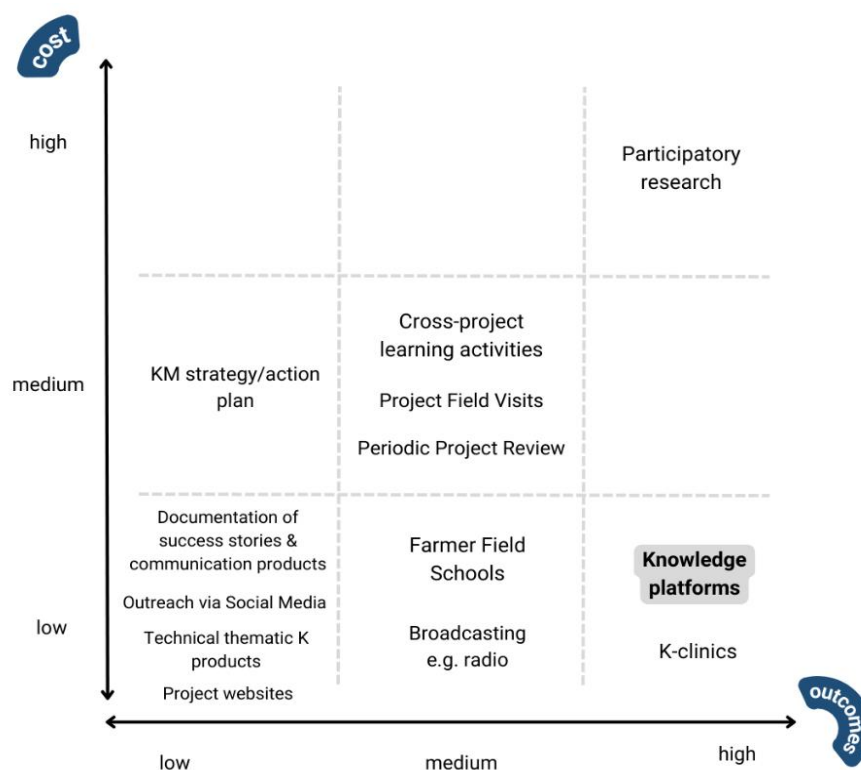
series publications were the majority, reaching 70 per cent and 67 per cent respectively.

274. **Better access to knowledge products could also improve their cost-efficiency.** CLE interviews and staff surveys interviews indicate a high level of time spent by IFAD staff in locating knowledge products, as a result of an ineffective archiving and document storage system. The absence of a functioning searchable document repository leads to IFAD staff resorting to ad hoc request to colleagues to meet the demands of the production of specific communication or analytical material. This burdens staff, especially in country offices, who have limited capacity in relation to the requests received. Staff indicated that a better repository system would be beneficial to reducing this burden, while understanding that such requests would not be entirely eliminated. Furthermore, the predominance of English-language publications also limits their use in non-English speaking countries. CLE interviews point to the willingness of IFAD staff to make knowledge products available in all languages but lacking the funding for translation. In the future, this problem might be mitigated through the effective use of Artificial Intelligence.

Cost-effectiveness of knowledge management practices

275. **Direct exchanges between project level stakeholders are among the most cost-effective knowledge management practices.** The CLE's country case studies indicate that practices such as cross-project learning activities, project periodic reviews, farmer field schools are among those with a good balance between costs and effectiveness. Costs of such practices vary broadly, depending, for instance, on the geographical scope of the exchanges and the number of participants, therefore the CLE cost effectiveness analysis is based on broad estimates. Effectiveness, as measured, by CLE interviews in country case studies, relates to the extent to which these practices led to KM outcomes such as improved project performance.
276. Figure 15 presents an overview of the KM practices found. Low-cost practices, with low outcomes include documentation of success stories, social media and project websites. The analysis also illustrated that the presence of KM strategies and action plans at country level was not a highly effective practice, while it bears 'medium' level costs. On the contrary, the Participatory research conducted within projects, showcases a robust 75 per cent success rate (based on the twenty CLE country case studies) as its deep level of analysis of project-related issues, provided valuable contribution to project performance; this however comes at a relatively higher cost. Finally, the SKD knowledge clinics are low cost and high effectiveness practices as they entail short 30-minute demand driven session for IFAD staff to get guidance from the KM Unit in SKD on various aspects of KM, such as getting basic guidance on KM, extracting relevant data from projects and managing limited resources allocating to KM.

Figure 15
Costs and outcomes of selected IFAD knowledge practices



Source: CLE analysis based on views data from ICT and cost data from CLE interviews

277. Communication and social media-related practices are among the most frequently mentioned KM practices. Despite being low cost and often perceived as less effective for knowledge management, country studies have confirmed their effectiveness. Collecting and disseminating success stories, especially through local TV and radio channels, primarily serve as communication and outreach tools. While their direct contribution to knowledge management may be low, they are moderately cost-effective at the country level. Furthermore, IFAD promotes the use of radio to share local knowledge among farmers.
278. **IFAD's knowledge platforms generally entail relatively low costs, while their effectiveness varies significantly depending on the level of engagement of members.** Within IFAD's arrangement of knowledge management platforms, there exists a diverse range of platforms tailored to different audiences, objectives, and methods of engagement. These include websites (e.g., IFAD official website), communities of practice, social media platforms (e.g., Facebook groups), Networks (e.g., The Smallholder and Agri-SME Finance and Investment Network, SAFIN) and Living repositories (e.g., IFAD KM Resource Centre). While detailed costing is not available, the CLE assessed, through interviews, that the costs of maintaining these platforms is low, with somewhat higher costs associated to websites which require a basic IT infrastructure to be maintained, as opposed to other platforms. Engagement is measured by the number of members and the number of messages exchanged on the platform, however this data was not available for all platforms, complemented with interviews and, where possible, direct observation.
279. **Platforms that cater to both internal and external stakeholders have greater reach and influence.** Examples include the IFAD Biodiversity Knowledge Platform, Cambodia Data Use Community for Agriculture and Rural Development, and IFAD Innovation Network, which report high levels of engagement. Similarly, social media outreach is evident in platforms like IFADASIA and

- FIDAFrique/IFADAfrica, with significant audience numbers on Facebook. Such platforms underscore the IFAD's commitment to connecting with a wider audience, harnessing the power of popular digital platforms to amplify their messages.
280. Engagement remains paramount in measuring the vitality of these platforms. Notably, IFAD Innovation Network and Farmers' Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) stand out with high message engagement, suggesting vibrant, active communities of users who frequently interact and share information. In contrast, platforms like Uganda Data Use Community and ESA-Division Country programme assistant (CPA)'s Group appear more muted, hinting at their primary role as information dissemination channels.
281. **Externally owned platforms introduce the potential for enriched collaborative engagement, broadening the scope of influence and knowledge sharing.** Platforms such as KM4DEV, SAFIN¹²², and PARM¹²³ serve as avenues where IFAD can potentially harness a more extensive range of expertise, perspectives, and resources. Furthermore, such collaborations might just be the gateway to amplifying the effect of KM as a whole, offering richer insights and fostering a more holistic approach to addressing challenges. However, it is important to recognize that the tangible effects and contributions of these platforms to IFAD vary. While the potential is vast, the actual outcome depends on several factors, including the alignment of goals, availability of resources, and mutual commitment.
282. Platforms are flexible tools, with their use rising and falling depending on the engagement of their members, keeping costs low, and allowing IFAD to adapt to emerging needs. While certain platforms have showcased continued relevance from 2014 to 2023, others, particularly more recent ones, are yet to demonstrate that they tailor to specific demands. In particular, given that posts on the IFAD social reporting blog only extend to 2020, pointing to limited reader interaction thereafter.
283. **Platforms have diverse uses and purposes.** Communities of Practice such as the IFAD Biodiversity Knowledge Platform offer specialized insights, while more universal platforms like social media and websites provide broad outreach. IFAD's Philanthropy Learning Lab (developed by IFAD's Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Office) stands out with its actionable objectives, hinting at the potential for real-world impacts like partnerships or fund sourcing.
284. Region-specific platforms allow IFAD to fine tune content and engagement strategies, providing a more targeted and effective KM approach. To maximize the potential of these external platforms and what they can bring to the table for KM, it's imperative that there's a consistent and guaranteed flow of resources. This not only includes financial investments but also involves dedicated time, effort, and commitment from all involved parties. Guaranteeing these resources ensures that the platforms can operate at their optimum capacity, bringing forth their fullest potential contribution to KM within IFAD's context.

F. Overall efficiency of resources for KM

285. Resources for KM are unevenly distributed in IFAD. Financial and human resources are concentrated in IFAD headquarters, and more specifically in SKD. Regional divisions and country offices are notoriously short of financial and human resources for KM. There is a small number of full-time KM staff and experts, the majority of them at junior levels and paid from supplementary funds. This pattern does not enable broad-based ownership among IFAD staff and limits the prospects for a sustained integration of KM practices into the organisation. The review found that IFAD is short of a broader range of cost-efficient knowledge products. Cost-

¹²² <https://safinetwork.org/> The Smallholder and Agri-SME Finance and Investment Network. Hosted by IFAD.

¹²³ <https://www.p4arm.org/> Platform for Agricultural Risk Management. Hosted by IFAD.

efficient KM practices such as knowledge clinics and knowledge platforms are currently run by consultants and would require qualified staff to be sustained.

Key finding on the efficient use of resources for KM

- The adoption of the KM strategy did not lead to an increase in human and financial resources, to match the ambition of the strategy.
- Staff is the key asset for IFAD. In all cases, reviewed success depended on the individual motivation and commitment of staff. **High workloads, understaffed country offices, vacant positions and knowledge drain due to reassignment and turnover of staff** were recurrent themes.
- **Use of consultants to initiate and sustain KM practices in regional and HQ divisions limits ownership and integration within the organisation.** Staff positions fully dedicated to KM are scarce and mostly funded from supplementary funds.
- The capacity of SKD to support KM at the country level is limited. SKD staff with project assignments have little time to support KM, even if they are posted in the region or country.
- An examination of the regional divisions indicated an uneven distribution of financial and human resources. **At country level KM is grossly under-resourced and relies on ad-hoc measures to plug in funding gaps.**
- The evaluation noted the **absence of systematic plans for capturing and transferring tacit knowledge** before staff departure in most country case studies.
- **Cost effectiveness of knowledge products is not analysed in IFAD**, which poses the risk of an inefficient allocation of resources. The review also shows that IFAD is short of relevant knowledge products that can be produced at reasonable costs.
- At country-level, project staff have adapted a number of low-cost KM practices. Direct exchanges between project level stakeholders are among the most cost-effective KM practices. Communication and social media-related practices are low cost and country studies have confirmed their effectiveness.
- Better access to knowledge products could also improve their cost-efficiency. Platforms and CoPs are a cost-efficient way to increase access to knowledge, but the large number of platforms in IFAD also reduces efficiency. Platforms and CoPs that cater to both internal and external stakeholders have greater reach and influence.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

286. The CLE has reviewed a period which has seen major strategic developments and organisational reforms. SKD was reconfigured in 2018. This involved moving the technical arm of PMD, the PTA, into SKD where it became PMI and ECG. IFAD Senior Management adopted the KM strategy in 2019 with an action plan focussed on SKD; at the same time, it established the CDI and the three SSTC and KM Centres under different departments. While continuing with the decentralisation reforms, the organisation implemented reassignment exercises in 2020 and 2022, causing major movements and disruptions in country programmes, as previously noted in the IOE CLE on decentralisation (2023). Furthermore, many senior staff, including the senior knowledge officer, have retired and younger staff have taken their positions. The extent of these changes, and their disjointed nature, made it challenging for the organisation to discharge a forceful organisation-wide KM initiative in line with the ambitions of its knowledge management strategy.
287. **The KM architecture is lagging behind the unfolding decentralisation process.** The 2019 KM strategy was a state-of-the art document with the potential to align its evolving KM architecture to the ongoing decentralisation reforms. IFAD has made substantive progress enhancing its field presence since 2019; country directors, who have a responsibility for KM in partner countries, are now outposted. In order to fulfil its decentralisation targets IFAD has dismantled some of the HQ-based PMI teams that had been leading knowledge exchange at global levels, for example on rural finance, by deploying them to different regions. The SKD staff outposted to decentralized offices retains a reporting line to HQ, limiting its integration into the decentralized structure. Nevertheless, the majority of SKD staff, especially those at senior levels, remain in HQ. Providing effective support to regions, while maintaining visibility and excellence globally in areas that are of strategic importance for IFAD will be a balancing act.
288. **IFAD's institutional set up for KM is not adequate to position itself as knowledge player on rural transformation within the larger landscape.** The formal KM architecture is focussed on SKD, disregarding the organisation-wide nature of KM in IFAD and the diversity of KM roles within the organization. Within this fragmented institutional framework, the KMCG has been useful as an organisation-wide platform for knowledge sharing. As a convener of the KMCG, SKD front office does not have the capacity to support a more coherent and effective KM across the various departments. IFAD's ambition to contribute to rural transformation, including scaling up solutions, requires recognizing the different roles in KM that would adequately consolidate and share different types of knowledges with its stakeholders at global, regional and country levels. IFAD's knowledge is produced in a piecemeal, fragmented, "projectized" way, without thinking strategically about contributions to necessary systemic changes needed for rural transformation. There is no overarching knowledge agenda, which would enable such a systems approach to knowledge generation and sharing.
289. **Gaps in KM capacity and senior guidance were the underlying reasons for the absence of evidence on KM effectiveness.** IFAD's conceptualization of the role of KM within the organization demonstrates its commitment to use KM to enhance its development effectiveness, recognizing its importance in serving its clients through improved programmes and policy support. Yet IFAD does not have the frameworks in place to demonstrate its effectiveness as knowledge provider at corporate, regional and country levels. KM Budgets and results are not being tracked, and reporting of corporate-level results is focussed on HQ-based activities only. As front-line implementers of KM in IFAD regional divisions struggle to adequately support KM activities. This dovetails with structural challenges: the absence of dedicated KM frameworks in some areas points to gaps in strategic

planning and KM prioritization. The challenge deepens with lack of capacities and sustainable human resources. Relying on sporadic grants, supplementary funds or project savings introduces uncertainties, hinting at shortfalls in long-term KM planning. Such an approach, while rendering short-term benefits, poses risks for enduring results.

290. **IFAD has not kept pace with contemporary evolution on KM paradigms.** An effective KM architecture requires a different generations of KM practices working together and sustaining one another. IFAD has shown some improvements in 1st and 2nd generation practices through regional level platforms and repositories and knowledge gap maps, and recent attempts to improve the usability of its corporate data systems. The found few examples of the most advanced ones that emphasize the importance of wider knowledge ecosystem diverse knowledges, linking organizational, societal and indigenous knowledge. Transformational 5th and 6th generation practices were often funded through regular grants, which are now less available.
291. **Evidence from CLE case studies found positive cases where KM practices in countries have shown results, but overall, they require more support.** Evidence from the country case studies demonstrates that IFAD has the potential and knowledge to deliver highly transformative KM practices at country level, which can support rural transformation, and in some cases has been able to do this. Projects depend considerably on IFAD support for institutionalizing KM. There is no set body of experiences being leveraged in any country to build foundational capacity for KM during design or implementation. Approaches were typically one-off or ad-hoc; lack of institutional capturing these experiences have led to an inconsistent and fractured approach to KM. Later generation practices based on multi-stakeholder engagement bring the most tangible routes toward the development results for rural transformation but are impacted by the availability of a supportive structure and more foundational understanding of the role of KM within projects. Knowledge partnerships can enhance IFAD's effectiveness and impact for rural transformation, as shown by the country case studies. They also strengthen the efficiency of IFAD's KM practices and increase the likelihood of the sustainability of practices and their results.
292. **The CLE highlights the challenges that IFAD will have to address in order to become more effective and efficient in the generation and use of knowledge.** IFAD's internal structures and mechanisms have not been conducive to effective and efficient KM practices. Knowledge retention mechanisms have not been sufficient to mitigate knowledge attrition under IFAD's decentralization and reassignment policies. This was in part due to a lack of well-functioning digital platforms to enable sufficient storage and sharing of knowledge. The absence of senior KM specialists and the scarcity of full-time knowledge managers within the organization are obstacles to professionalizing KM. Currently KM expertise and performance is neither well recognized nor incentivized. The reduced availability of regular grants for KM is a limitation for introducing innovative (5th and 6th generation) KM practices that IFAD will have to overcome.
293. **Knowledge will be key for IFAD to raise its relevance as development player.** Knowledge is a vital matter of to ensure that the organisations get to the forefront of rural transformation. IFAD can play a key role in translating knowledge from operations and contribute to the global understanding of how rural transformation can happen. In order to do so, IFAD needs to align its knowledge products and the knowledge embedded in its projects. Currently knowledge from operations is not effectively synthesized and integrated with rigorous assessments for scaling up. Successful mobilisation of resources will require IFAD to keep abreast of the latest development and good practices. Artificial intelligence offers huge potential for IFAD in terms of searching of its complex of internal databases and navigating external knowledge. However, this potential and the related

challenges are moving targets as the field develops very rapidly, making it extremely important for IFAD KM staff to continue in knowledge partnerships.

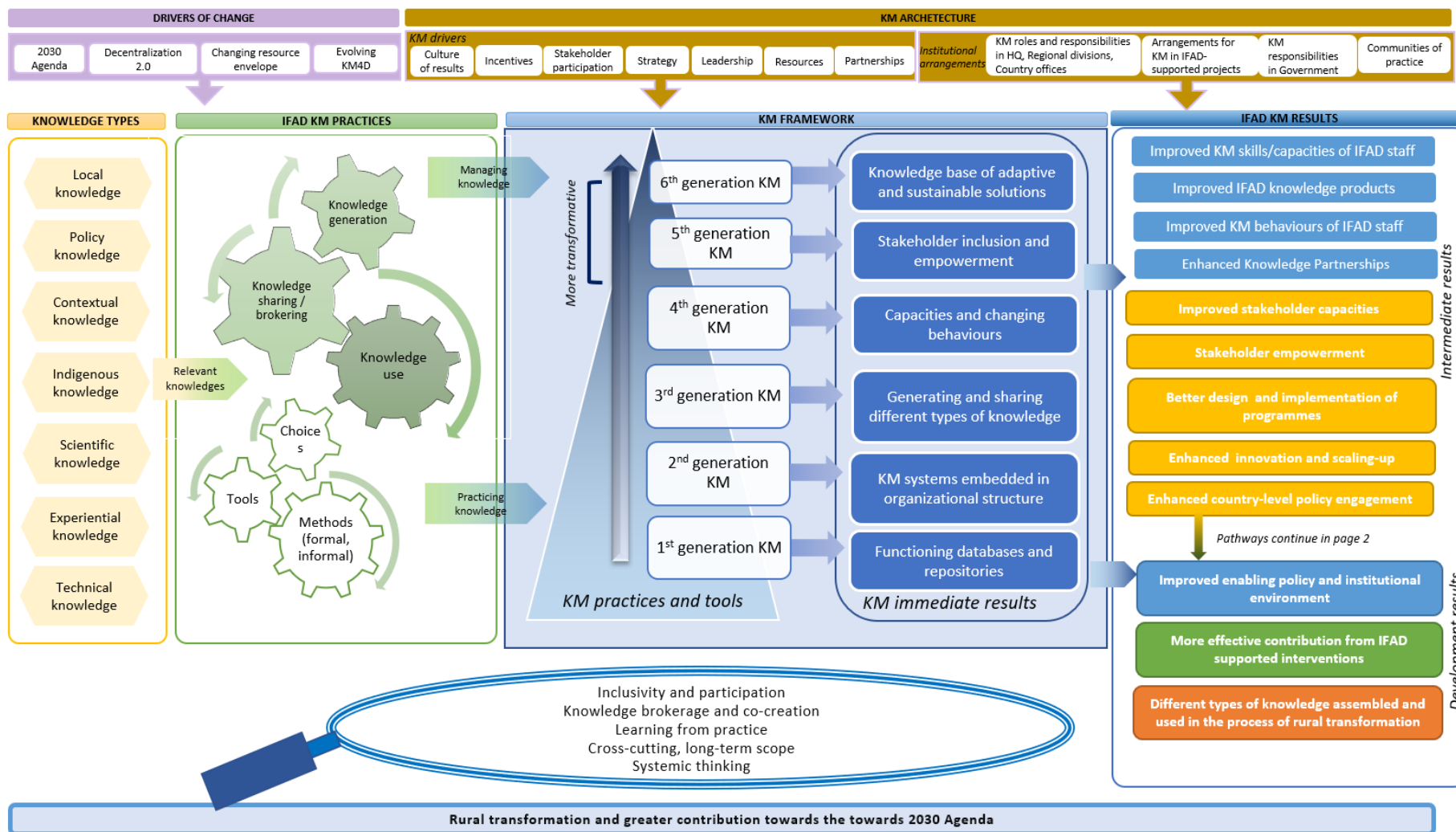
B. Recommendations

294. The proposed recommendations address the above challenges within the current resource constraints. IFAD could mitigate resource constraints through more effective and efficient utilization of existing capacities and resources to some extent. In addition, the CLE recommends that resources for KM should be mobilised through reallocations of internal funding and additional resources from knowledge partnerships.
295. **Recommendation 1: IFAD should reclaim its role in elevating the operational knowledge it generates to a global level in order to inform the rural transformation debate.**
- 1a) The current KM Strategy should be complemented by a lighter, more flexible '**Knowledge agenda**' outlining the goals and priorities of KM throughout IFAD with a greater emphasis on rural transformation and fifth and sixth generation practices, such as multi-stakeholder processes and recognizing the importance of local knowledge in country programmes. This will also involve more pluralistic definitions of knowledge. It would also cover the relevant non-lending areas, including SSTC, CLPE and innovation.
 - 1b) **Knowledge partnerships** should be at the core of the IFAD approach to KM and will lead to greater effectiveness and impact. They will also strengthen the efficiency of IFAD's KM practices and increase the likelihood of the sustainability of practices and their results. The agenda would guide stronger engagement with knowledge partnerships at global, regional and country levels.
 - 1c) To address the fragmented institutional framework, IFAD should establish a **small strategic office at executive level**, similar to or combined with CDI, with adequate capacity to guide the implementation of the knowledge agenda. The office would be in charge of initiating, developing and managing the knowledge agenda for IFAD.
 - 1d) **Communities of Practice (CoPs)** should be more systematically used to support innovation and learning; their performance should be monitored.
296. **Recommendation 2: IFAD Management should initiate a decisive shift away from its overly centralized KM architecture and allocate sufficient human and financial resources across decentralised levels.**
- 2a) The ongoing decentralisation in IFAD would also require more **devolved responsibilities and resources for KM**, with a lighter touch in terms of central planning and reporting. The decentralised KM roles currently in PMI, ECG and SSTC should be firmly integrated into regional structures and reporting lines adjusted accordingly. Reporting on SSTC and KM should go into regional divisions (PMD) – to provide effective support for country offices.
 - 2b) Regional divisions should consolidate the available **KM capacities** dispersed throughout the organization and appoint full-time knowledge managers responsible for consolidating knowledge from operations and facilitating knowledge exchanges with stakeholders at country and regional levels. Gaps in KM expertise could be compensated by leveraging knowledge partnerships.
 - 2c) Regional divisions should develop a framework for monitoring the effectiveness of KM practices at regional and country levels, with adequate indicators to measure **KM outcomes** in terms of changing KM behaviours, skills and capacities as well as the uptake and use of knowledge products. Performance on KM should be recognised and adequately rewarded.

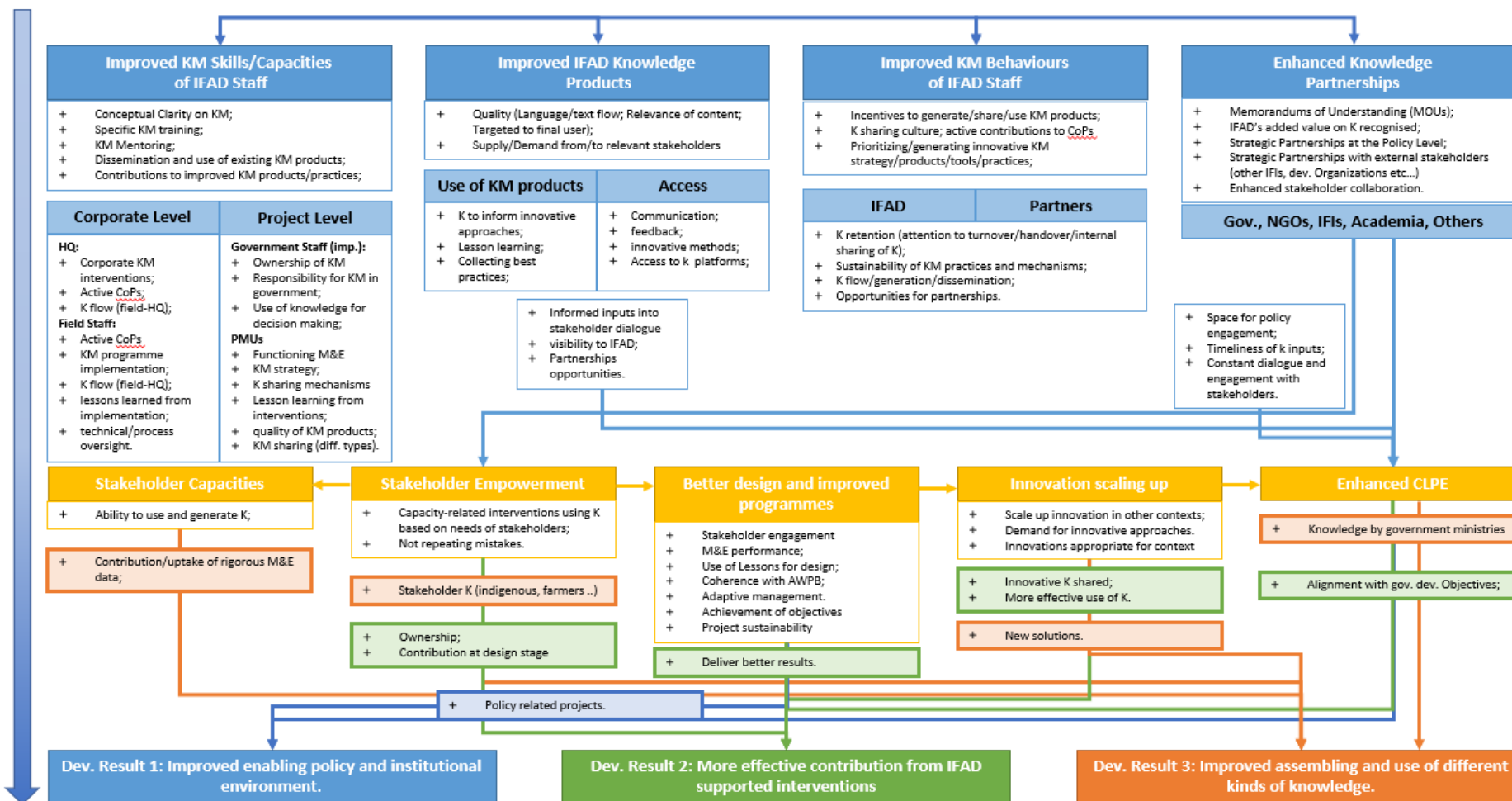
- 2d) The **KMCG** should play an important role as an inclusive platform to support good practices on KM across regions. The **KM Resource centre** should continue providing uniform formats and resources across KM.
297. **Recommendation 3: IFAD Management should monitor KM effectiveness and focus on KM practices and products that provide the best value for money at global and operational levels.**
- 3a) **Monitoring of knowledge products and platforms** need to be results focussed so that choices can be made between the most effective products and platforms.
- 3b) Divisions should adopt a **consistent and comparable budgeting system** for KM. Regional divisions would monitor the cost-effectiveness of the KM practices at regional and country levels.
- 3c) Prioritise KM practices that involve local partners in the **co-creation of knowledge**, linking different knowledge systems. Knowledge practices that involve multiple stakeholders are likely to be more effective and sustainable.
- 3d) **Annual reports on budget use** and KM results should be reported to the President.
298. **Recommendation 4: IFAD's next strategic framework should define how knowledge would enable IFAD to position itself as driver of rural transformation within a global context of uncertainty and crisis.**
- 4a) **Knowledge production** should be guided by a systems approach connecting the multiple dimensions of transformative change and the stakeholders and partners who would contribute to this knowledge. Demand, quality and cost effectiveness should be among the key criteria driving knowledge generation and sharing.
- 4b) Knowledge management should aim at contributing to the "bigger, better and smarter" in IFAD's framework through its role in **scaling up, replication and policy engagement** for transformational change.
- 4c) Enhancing the effectiveness of corporate knowledge management should be an integral part of IFAD's **reform agenda**. IFAD would need to define its comparative advantage against other strong KM players among the IFIs and private sector who are also supporting transformative change.
- 4d) **Application of international standards** would raise the bar for knowledge management in IFAD. The ISO 30401 provides common definitions and standards for organisational processes that IFAD should consider its future KM strategy.

Conceptual Framework

Overall Theory of Change



The Pathways to results



Evaluation Framework

Overall evaluation question 1: How relevant and coherent is IFAD’s institutional framework for knowledge management given the mandate and needs of the organization and within the global, regional, and local contexts in which IFAD works (relevance and coherence)

Sub-question	Specific questions	Indicators	Data sources
1.1 Is there a clearly articulated strategy guiding KM (at corporate and regional level)? KM STRATEGY	1.1.1 Do IFAD’s <u>corporate KM strategy</u> and action plan provide clear orientation on KM?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFAD’s KM strategy aligned with IFAD’s mandate IFAD’s KM strategy reflects contemporary good practice on KM KM strategy objectives and targets are aligned with the allocated budget Corporate KM strategy makes explicit the types of knowledge involved for rural transformation The KM strategy clarifies the roles of different levels of IFAD and different units The KM Action Plan results framework has clear metrics for knowledge uptake, quality, and influence that are actively tracked, and the results used to adjust future actions on KM 	(1) Corporate review of KM strategy and action plan (4) Corporate level: HQ interviews and FGDs
	1.1.2 Do <u>regional KM strategies</u> provide clear orientation on KM?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional KM strategies aligned with the cooperate KM strategies Regional KM strategies foresee clear roles and responsibilities on KM Regional KM strategies clarify links with country-level KM Regional KM strategies include priorities, actionable areas and related budgets for KM 	(5) Regional division studies
1.2 Is there visible and effective corporate leadership on KM in IFAD and clear strategic direction for corporate, regional, and country levels?	1.2.2 Does IFAD corporate leadership show strong and visible commitment to KM?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Executive Management Committee acts as IFAD’s KM champion. KM regularly discussed at EMC meetings and EMC minutes and decisions reflect the importance of KM 	(1) Review of corporate documents and data: speeches, EMC minutes/decisions (4) Corporate level: HQ interviews and FGDs

<i>Sub-question</i>	<i>Specific questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
LEADERSHIP		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of KM reflected in leadership speeches and presentations (for example, to the Executive Board) KM delivery is prioritised against other key demands by management? 	
1.3 Are IFAD's institutional arrangements for KM fit for purpose, functioning and well understood?	1.3.1 Are there appropriate institutional arrangements for relevant and effective KM in place at the corporate level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities of practice (CoPs) and networks are in place to connect IFAD staff at country/ regional/corporate levels, and with external partners and strengthen access to technical expertise and knowledge required to deliver the KM plan Approaches and tools that support knowledge flows and joint learning, especially user-oriented technologies and platforms combined with targeted communities of practice support faster access to the collective knowledge of staff, more efficient problem solving, and increased knowledge retention The KM Coordination Group is effective at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) identifying opportunities to change incentives, behaviours, and IFAD's organizational culture to support prioritisation of KM (ii) tracking IFAD's performance in KM across the organisation through the KM Action Plan results framework. KM Coordination Group effectively develops solutions to KM challenges as they arise, identifies gaps, proposes new initiatives, and contributes to the development of KM guidelines and capacity-building activities The KM Coordination Group works as an effective link to convey country and regional concerns and demands to corporate level partners and access to corporate KM resources for use in country programme delivery 	<p>(1) Review of corporate documents and data: KM strategies, action plans and related strategies</p> <p>(4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: HQ interviews and FGDs</p> <p>(5) Regional division studies</p>
KM ARCHITECTURE	1.3.2 Are the appropriate institutional arrangements for relevant and effective KM in place at the regional level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KM tools developed at regional division level align with and effectively support delivery of strategic objectives in COSOPs Formalized processes to connect IFAD country programme staff with each other, staff at regional/corporate level, and with external partners 	(5) Regional division studies

Sub-question	Specific questions	Indicators	Data sources
		<p>through communities of practice (CoPs) and networks are in place and strengthen access to technical expertise and knowledge required to deliver the KM plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is scope to deliver an effective KM strategy in a cost-neutral way at regional division level • Regional KM Focal Points or KM and Communication Specialists, prioritise supporting KM • Mechanisms to support coordination and exchange among KM staff in place • The role of the regional division is well understood at regional, country and corporate levels 	
<p>1.4 Are types of IFAD knowledge aligned with its strategic objectives and relevant to stakeholder needs?</p>	<p>1.4.1 How relevant was the knowledge produced at HQ, regional and country levels to three strategic objectives set out in the IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025? To what extent are the substantive types of knowledge¹²⁴ aligned with IFAD Strategic Framework?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different types of knowledge (tacit knowledge, codified knowledge, scientific knowledge, evidence for policy, best practices, indigenous knowledge, local knowledge, and others) are being curated and used. • Knowledge products sufficiently address cross-cutting themes of environment and climate, gender, nutrition and youth, and private sector engagement aligns. • Knowledge products address evidence gaps in IFAD's knowledge on rural development (for example, using IFAD knowledge gap maps) • The corporate decision to prioritise curation of knowledge in the cross-cutting themes of environment and climate, gender, nutrition and youth, and private sector engagement aligns with key knowledge needs of country programmes and partners at country level • Effective system in place to capture lessons learned within country programmes and curate it at corporate level 	<p>(1) Review of corporate documents and data: KM strategies, action plans and related strategies; Review of KM products</p>
<p>RELEVANCE OF KNOWLEDGE</p>	<p>INTERNAL RELEVANCE</p>		<p>(4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: KAP survey</p>
			<p>(5) Regional division studies</p> <p>(6) Country case studies</p>
	<p>1.4.2 How relevant was the knowledge produced at HQ, and regional levels to the needs of beneficiaries, partners and clients? Are there</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The knowledge products found in corporate knowledge repositories are useful and relevant to IFAD stakeholders. 	<p>(1) Review of corporate documents and data: Review of KM products</p>

¹²⁴ tacit knowledge, codified knowledge, scientific knowledge, evidence for policy, best practices, indigenous knowledge, local knowledge, and others

<i>Sub-question</i>	<i>Specific questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
	differences in the relevance of different KM products? EXTERNAL RELEVANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFAD KM products and practices rely on and integrate the voices of the rural people, and build on local and indigenous knowledge Knowledge generation, and curation, has been closely informed by the knowledge gaps and priorities identified by SKD, in the broader context of rural development. 	(4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: KAP survey (5) Regional division studies
	1.4.3 Are diverse types of knowledge found in corporate knowledge repositories? SUPPLY OF DIVERSE TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many different types of knowledge (tacit knowledge, codified knowledge, scientific knowledge, evidence for policy, best practices, indigenous knowledge, local knowledge, and others) Partners' knowledge effectively leveraged at global level 	(1) Review of corporate documents and data: Review of corporate KM tools and practices
	1.4.4 What are the factors explaining the presence of different KM practice types?		
1.5 Are IFAD's knowledge products and tools targeted to and accessible for IFAD's key stakeholders? TARGETING KNOWLEDGE AND ACCESSIBILITY	1.5.1 How effective is the access to IFAD knowledge products and tools by staff posted in different parts of the organisation? ACCESS/TARGETING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFAD Staff store knowledge in accessible ways IFAD knowledge platforms and repositories are easily accessible by IFAD staff Ease of access in line with those of other IFIs and development organisations IFAD knowledge platforms and repositories store information in an efficient way with limited fragmentation, gaps and overlaps Search tools are easy to use and reliable 	(1) Corporate level KM documents and data review: Review of corporate KM tools and practices; Review of KM products (4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: KAP survey; HQ interviews and FGDs
	1.5.2 To what extent are products targeting external audiences accessing and using the knowledge products and tools? ACCESS/TARGETING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFAD knowledge platforms and repositories are easily accessible by external users IFAD active in ensuring its knowledge is available on external platforms 	(1) Corporate level KM documents and data review: Review of corporate KM tools and practices; Review of KM products
	1.5.3 Do KM tools make it is easy to find knowledge relevant to demands at country programme level? EASE OF ACCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing knowledge within IFAD's systems is easy to locate, Existing knowledge within IFAD's systems is maintained and updated through curation to remain valuable 	(1) Corporate level KM documents and data review: Review of corporate KM tools and practices; Review of KM products

Sub-question	Specific questions	Indicators	Data sources
			(4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: Partner interviews (5) Regional division studies
1.6 How coherent are IFAD’s KM practices, internally and externally? COHERENCE	1.6.1 How coherent is IFAD’s internal approach and understanding of knowledge management? INTERNAL 1.6.2 How coherent are IFAD’s KM practices with external partners, especially the UN system and the IFIs and the wider KM4Dev community? EXTERNAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional and global grants provide consistent support to IFAD KM strategic objectives and to the integration of the four mainstreaming themes in IFAD’s operations There is a shared understanding of KM practices and processes across divisions, at national, regional and central levels IFAD KM approaches and understanding are consistent with approaches and understanding in the areas of SSTC, communications, monitoring, evaluation, digitalization (ICT4D), and country level policy engagement Coherent monitoring and lessons sharing IFAD strategy and approaches to KM are consistent with those produced by other UN entities (especially the RBAs), and IFIs IFAD understanding of KM is consistent with other UN entities (especially the RBAs), IFIs and the KM4Dev community At the country level, IFAD engages with the members of the UN country team in KM and related areas, including membership of system wide working groups and sharing knowledge for system wide programming processes. 	(3) Thematic deep dives: Grants review (4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: HQ focus group discussions and interviews (5) Regional division studies (6) Country case studies (2) Analysis of corporate Performance data and evaluations: Review of relevant KM evaluations; Review of UN organisations and IFIs (4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: HQ focus group discussions and interviews (6) Country studies
1.7 What are IFAD’s comparative strengths in KM? IFAD COMPARATIVE STRENGTH	1.7.1 What advantage does IFAD have as a knowledge provider relevant to the goals of rural transformation, within the landscape of development organizations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A focused, prioritized approach to knowledge development and mobilization at corporate level that aligned with investment opportunities and in areas where IFAD has a comparative advantage over other IFIs and relevant UN agencies that in place and operating effectively. 	(1) Corporate Level Documents Review (2) Analysis of corporate performance data and evaluations: IOE Corporate evaluations

Sub-question	Specific questions	Indicators	Data sources
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFAD has been able position itself as a stakeholder at global level as a “knowledge provider and partner” with UN organizations, IFIs and donors through its participation in key networks, such as MDLP and KM4dev IFAD’s comparative strengths are recognized by its development partners 	(CSPE Review; CLE Synthesis) (4) Corporate Level: Partner interviews and FGDs (3) Thematic deep dives: Comparative analysis of good practices of from other IFIs and UN entities. (6) Country case studies
	1.7.2 Does IFAD make full use of its comparative strengths when designing its strategies and developing its practices and tools at country level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFAD’s comparative strengths on KM clearly articulated in COSOPs and/or KM strategies Evidence of assessment of comparative strength at the country level in developing the COSOP 	(6) Country case studies
	1.7.2 Does IFAD recognize the comparative strengths of external partners and effectively use the most up to date global knowledge?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> References to recent research from external sources in KM products Use of recent peer-reviewed scientific knowledge in KM products 	(4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: Focus group discussions with UN and IFI KM staff; review of knowledge products
1.8 Other factors and lessons learned	1.8.1 What could IFAD learn from comparable UN organizations and IFIs to improve its KM relevance and coherence in the future?		(3) Thematic deep dives: Comparative analysis and good practices form other IFIs, UN partners. (4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: Focus group discussions with UN and IFI KM staff.
	1.8.2 What other factors can explain the relevance and coherence of IFAD’s KM practices?		All evidence blocks

Overarching Evaluation Question 2: To what extent has IFAD, through its KM practices, effectively contributed to rural transformation in a sustainable manner and what factors can explain its performance? (Effectiveness criterion)

<i>Sub-question</i>	<i>Specific questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
2.1 How effective were KM practices in supporting development results? DEVELOPMENT RESULTS	2.1.1 How effective were KM practices in supporting the country-level enabling environment for rural development, including policy development and implementation? Which types of practices have been most effective? (Development Result #1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust and relevant knowledge is available for stakeholder engagement at the country level. • Lessons learned from operations are systematically documented and shared for country level policy engagement (CLPE) and scaling up advocacy. • Knowledge generated through SSTC contributes to CLPE at country level • Lessons learnt from IFAD program to support the scaling up of successful initiatives in country and through SSTC. • Consistently high scaling up ratings at supervision missions and evaluations (ratings 5 and above) - if available • Forums for policy dialogue between the government and its development partners (such as sector working groups) or communities of practice effectively mainstream innovation experiences for scaling up 	<p>(1) Review of corporate documents and data: Review of corporate KM products; SSTC programme review.</p> <p>(3) Thematic deep dives: Grants analysis</p> <p>(4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: HQ focus group discussions and interviews</p> <p>(5) Regional division studies</p> <p>(6) Country case studies</p>
	2.1.2 To what extent have KM practices contributed to strengthen IFAD-funded interventions? Which types of practices have been most effective? (Development Result #2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes that bring people together to openly reflect, discuss and share their ideas and lessons learned are regularly used and include an openness to discussing failure. • Effective mechanisms are in place to support the principles of proximity and adaptability, thereby emphasising IFAD staff's ability to learn, respond and adapt on a continuous basis (this may relate for example to IFAD country presence, staff turnover, dedicated staff and resources to KM at project and office levels; but also to efficiency of M&E and innovative management approaches such as modules) • Tacit knowledge and know-how of staff and consultants is consistently used and maintained • Systematic processes are in place to support cross-learning and innovation from both lending and non-lending activities 	<p>(1) Review of corporate documents and data: SSTC programme review</p> <p>(2) Analysis of corporate KM performance data and evaluations: QAG publications; climate change evaluation; CLE review</p> <p>(3) thematic deep dives: tracking signature solutions</p> <p>(4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: HQ interviews and FGDs</p> <p>(5) Regional division studies</p> <p>(6) Country case studies</p>

Sub-question	Specific questions	Indicators	Data sources
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong evidence that lessons from success and failure are fully embedded in IFAD’s operations and informed new strategies and project design • Evidence that KM practices are contributing to IFAD’s organisational learning at corporate, regional and country levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved quality of project designs ○ Improved quality of supervision ○ Improved performance of M&E systems ○ Adaptive project management 	
<p>2.1.3 To what extent did KM enable and facilitate the assembling and use of different types of knowledge at country-level? Which types of practices have been most effective? (Development Result #3)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic curation of different types of knowledge enables stakeholder access and sharing experience and lessons beyond individual projects. • Co-creation of knowledge: Local stakeholders and beneficiaries fully engaged in the design, generation and dissemination of knowledge through practice-based learning and participatory action research in lending and non-lending initiatives. They are perceived as primary contributors of knowledge and active partners in dissemination. • Participatory, qualitative methods are used in consultation processes with national and local stakeholders. There is some evidence that priority is increasingly being given to local and indigenous knowledge and languages, reflecting 6th generation KM4Dev. • ‘Multiple knowledges’ of all stakeholders are taken into account in efforts to address the ‘wicked’ or complex problem of rural transformation, characteristic of 5th generation KM4dev. • Multi-stakeholder processes are evident in which KM practices go beyond the scope of the project/programme, or the administrative boundary, and reach out to other stakeholders, also using a community or a landscape dimension, consistent with 5th generation KM. 	<p>(6) Country case studies</p>
<p>2.2 How effective were KM strategies in supporting the development and</p>	<p>2.2.1 To what extent did IFAD’s corporate and regional knowledge management strategies address the conditions for effective generation and use of knowledge in partner countries?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFAD’s KM practices met the demand from key partners, principally within Government, for knowledge. • Systematic curation of project level documentation that allows stakeholders to both easily access and share 	<p>(6) Country case studies</p>

Sub-question	Specific questions	Indicators	Data sources
implementation of transformative KM practices?		experience and lessons learned from the project portfolio that can also be used by the IFAD country programme in scaling-up and country level policy engagement	
KM STRATEGY		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing knowledge within IFAD’s systems is easy to locate and country programme staff are willing to search for it • Ways to effectively link/coordinate support through global and regional grant outputs with contribution to the country programme strategic objectives is possible • Knowledge that is shared is not context specific and useful in other environments 	
	2.2.2 To what extent did IFAD’s COSOPs and, where available, country knowledge management strategies, address the conditions for effective generation and use of knowledge in partner countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFAD’s KM practices met the demand from key partners, principally within Government, for knowledge. • Systematic curation of project level documentation that allows stakeholders to both easily access and share experience and lessons learned from the project portfolio that can also be used by the IFAD country programme in scaling-up and country level policy engagement • Existing knowledge within IFAD’s systems is easy to locate and country programme staff are willing to search for it • Ways to effectively link/coordinate support through global and regional grant outputs with contribution to the country programme strategic objectives is possible • Knowledge that is shared is not context specific and useful in other environments 	(6) Country case studies
2.3 Is IFAD engaging in effective knowledge partnerships at the country level?	2.3.1 How effective are country-level partnerships to generate, share, broker and use knowledge?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFAD’s partnership approach embedded in consultative policy processes in the agricultural sector. • Knowledge partnerships established with other development organizations including NGOs • Knowledge partnerships established with international research organisations • Knowledge partnerships established in-country with local partners including government and local NGOs • Communities of practice are active at inter-organisational level and beyond 	(2) Analysis of corporate performance data and evaluations: IFAD client surveys (6) Country case studies
PARTNERSHIPS			

Sub-question	Specific questions	Indicators	Data sources
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFAD makes full use of external knowledge to meet it's needs 	
	<p>2.3.2 Is there demand from key partners, principally within Government, for IFAD knowledge? DEMAND FOR KNOWLEDGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government at different levels expresses demand for knowledge from IFAD Government at all levels using and/or engaging with IFAD KM practices and tools, including through using KM platforms, attending KM events, participating in communities of practice Consultative policy processes exist in the agricultural sector which provides opportunities for IFAD to engage in the process Processes that bring people together to openly reflect, discuss and share their ideas and lessons learned are regularly used and include an openness to discussing failure. Effective operational partnerships for knowledge management Knowledge co-creation, involving multiple knowledges and external stakeholders is used for resolving "wicked" problems 	(6) Country case studies
	<p>2.3.3 Does government have the capacities for effective KM?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate capacity for/approaches to policy formulation and implementation exists in relevant institutions of government (in the ministry of agriculture and beyond, as relevant) responsible for policy development and implementation Government's ability to engage in effective dialogue not affected by high staff turnover within the institutions responsible for implementation, irregular fulfilment in providing counterpart funds, and problems with monitoring and assessing the impact of operations Sufficient know-how on knowledge management and how to use KM tools to support effective curation of project level documentation 	(6) Country case studies
<p>2.4 Did IFAD share, broker and use the best available knowledge for</p>	<p>2.4.1 Was the knowledge generated, shared, brokered and used developed based on strong evidence?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust and relevant knowledge is available and provided in a way that is accessible to country programmes in an unfragmented manner. 	<p>(1) Corporate level KM documents and data review: review of KM products</p> <p>(5) Regional division studies</p>

<i>Sub-question</i>	<i>Specific questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
effective in-country engagement? SUPPLY OF KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KM tools developed at regional division level align with and effectively support delivery of KM to delivery of strategic objectives in COSOPs • KM Coordination Group (KMCG) effectively develops solutions to KM challenges as they arise, identifies gaps, proposes new initiatives, and contributes to the development of KM guidelines and capacity-building activities • Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) tools set milestones and track changes over a sufficient length of time, allowing to capture long-term, iterative processes beyond project time and physical boundaries 	(6) Country Case Studies	
	2.4.2 Was the knowledge generated, shared and brokered relevant to the needs of users, in IFAD and externally including in other countries (SSTC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of use of IFAD knowledge platforms and products by external actors • Evidence of direct learning of external actors of IFAD project interventions 	(6) Country Case Studies
2.5 How sustainable have been the IFAD KM practices, tools and results? SUSTAINABILITY	2.5.1 Did IFAD undertake efforts to ensure the sustainability of the KM practices and tools it developed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects explicitly consider sustainability of KM practices in design, for example in an exist strategy. • Finance and staffing in place to ensure continuity • KM partnerships such as platforms, forum and Communities of practice (CoPs) are sustainable after external economic support ends 	(6) Country Case Studies
	2.5. Has IFAD considered and undertaken actions to ensure the sustainability of KM results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects explicitly consider the sustainability of results • Integration of KM practices and products into national structures 	(6) Country Case Studies
2.6 Other factors and lessons learned	2.17 What other factors can explain the effectiveness of IFAD's KM practices?		<p>(3) Thematic deep dives: Comparative analysis and good practices form other IFIs, UN partners.</p> <p>(4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: Focus group discussions with UN and IFI KM staff.</p>

<i>Sub-question</i>	<i>Specific questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
	2.16 What can IFAD learn from its partners to improve KM effectiveness at country level?		All evidence blocks

Overarching Evaluation Question 3: How efficient has been the use of the available (financial and human) resources to deliver the intended knowledge practices and outcomes? (Efficiency criteria)

<i>Sub-question</i>	<i>Specific questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
3.1 Are human resources for KM efficiently and appropriately deployed and is sufficient staff capacity in place? HUMAN RESOURCES AND CAPACITY	3.1.1 Are human resources for KM efficiently and appropriately deployed at the <u>corporate level</u> and is sufficient staff capacity in place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient and qualified staff in relevant corporate units • Effective approach in place to retain tacit knowledge with low turnover of staff • Adequate seniority of staff with KM responsibility • Incentives for corporate staff to engage in KM practices • KM training opportunities for staff and other possibilities for KM capacity development 	<p>(1) Review of Corporate Documents and data: Human Resources Data</p> <p>(4) Corporate level: HQ interviews and FGDs; KAP Survey</p>
	3.1.2 Are human resources for KM efficiently and appropriately deployed at the <u>regional level</u> and is sufficient staff capacity in place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient and qualified staff in RDs • Effective approach in place to retain tacit knowledge with low turnover of key regional division staff • Regional team resources available to fill gaps in skills of the country team • Access to a specific budget allocation for knowledge management activities • KM focal points with clear job descriptions in RDs • A good balance is achieved between using IFAD staff and consultants for KM activities (to promote sustainability) • Adequate seniority of staff with KM responsibility • Incentives for RD staff to engage in KM practices and prioritize KM against other demands 	(5) Regional Division Studies
	3.1.3 Are human resources for KM efficiently and appropriately deployed at the <u>country level</u> and is sufficient staff capacity in place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient country presence and qualified staff in ICOs. 	(6) Country case studies

<i>Sub-question</i>	<i>Specific questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country programme staff can clearly identify knowledge needs that can be filled by IFAD and that will make significant contributions to delivery of COSOP strategic objectives Effective approach in place to retain tacit knowledge with low turnover of country directors and other key country programme staff A good balance is achieved between using IFAD staff and consultants for KM activities (to promote knowledge retention and sustainability) Access to a specific budget allocation for knowledge management activities by country offices KM focal points with clear job descriptions in ICOs Sufficient know-how on knowledge management and how to use KM tools to support effective curation of project level documentation KM expertise present on IFAD supervision missions Adequate seniority of staff with KM responsibility Incentives for ICO and project staff to engage in KM practices 	
3.2 Are financial resources adequate and appropriate for supporting effective and sustainable KM practices FUNDING	3.2.1 To what extent were grants used to support KM at the regional and country levels? What funding patterns emerge?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of country grants in delivery of KM plan fully considered at the regional corporate levels and well channelled to the country level Global and regional grants offer an effective alternative pathway, than through the country programme, for using knowledge to contribute to IFAD's strategic goals in the Mid-term Strategic Framework 	(3) Thematic deep dives: Grants review (5) Regional division studies
	3.2.2 Are grant resources allocated for KM sufficient and appropriately targeted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country programmes that make good use of grants to support generation and use of knowledge in line with country programme objectives Global and regional grants effectively leveraged to support KM contribution to COSOP strategic objectives 	(6) Country case studies
	3.2.3 Did IFAD mobilize other resources to support its KM practices?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to a specific budget allocation for knowledge management activities by country offices 	(5) Regional division studies (6) Country case studies

<i>Sub-question</i>	<i>Specific questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reimbursable technical assistance is available to fill key knowledge gaps 	
3.3 How cost effective are the KM architecture, practices and tools? COST EFFECTIVENESS	3.3.1 Are IFAD knowledge products and tools cost effective ¹²⁵ ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs for knowledge products and tools are in line with those of other IFIs and development organisations Number of downloads (disaggregated by country) and costs Number of printed copies disseminated (disaggregated by country) and costs Number of citations by type of document 	<p>(1) Review of Corporate Documents and data: review of KM tools and practices; review of KM products</p> <p>(4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: HQ interviews and FGD; KAP survey</p>
	3.3.2 Is the KM institutional architecture cost effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relationship between the costs and the benefits show that the investment is worthwhile 	<p>(1) Review of Corporate Documents and data: review of KM tools and practices; review of KM products</p> <p>(4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: HQ interviews and FGD; KAP survey.</p>
	3.3.3 Did IFAD make full use of partnerships in the generation, sharing, brokering dissemination and use of knowledge to improve cost effectiveness?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of greater cost effectiveness from partnerships 	<p>(1) Review of Corporate Documents and data: review of KM tools and practices; review of KM products</p>
	3.3.4 Do IFAD staff conduct KM activities with a clear idea of what they will be used for and their added value?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFAD staff are clear about the purpose of their KM activities KM activities make clear the expected results and added value 	<p>(1) Review of Corporate Documents and data: review of KM tools and practices; review of KM products</p> <p>(6) Country Case studies</p>
	3.3.5 Did IFAD put in place mechanisms to effectively measure the costs and benefits of KM practices and products?’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear reporting of costs of KM practices and tools Efforts to assess benefits of KM practices and tools in place 	<p>(1) Review of Corporate Documents and data: review of KM tools and practices; review of KM products</p>

¹²⁵ a consideration of proportionality in terms of the expected benefits deriving from a product or tool relative to the cost

<i>Sub-question</i>	<i>Specific questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Data sources</i>
3.4 Other factors and lessons learned	3.4.1 What other factors can explain the efficiency of IFAD’s KM practices?		(3) Thematic deep dives: Comparative analysis and good practices from other IFIs, UN partners. (4) Corporate level and partner interviews and surveys: Focus group discussions with UN and IFI KM staff.
	3.4.2 What can IFAD learn from its partners to improve KM efficiency at country level		All evidence blocks

Background tables

Table 1

Knowledge management responsibilities of selected divisions by type of KM function

<i>Department</i>	<i>Division</i>	<i>Knowledge creation</i>	<i>Knowledge sharing through platforms, media, workshops or events</i>	<i>Knowledge use for advice, decision making, planning and/or design</i>
Corporate Services (CSD)	Information and Communications Technology (ICT)		IT infrastructure and digital tools	
Financial Operations (FOD)	Financial Management Services (FMD)		Monitor KM budgets; internal events	
Programme Management (PMD)	Regional and country offices	Contextual knowledge	Regional and country stakeholder workshops and platforms	COSOP, project designs and non-lending activities
		Policy knowledge		
		Local knowledge		
		Experiential knowledge		
	Operational Policy and Results (OPR)		Portfolio stocktakes	
Strategy and Knowledge (SKD)	Research and Impact Assessment Division (RIA)	Research	Publications Global knowledge sharing events	
	Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division (PMI)	Technical knowledge	Global knowledge forums and platforms	Strategies and COSOP/project designs
	Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division (ECG)	Technical knowledge	Global knowledge forums and platforms	Strategies and COSOP/project design
	Knowledge Unit (SKD front office)		Collection of success stories, evidence gap maps and partnerships	
External Relations and Governance (ERG)	Global Communications and Advocacy Division (COM)		Packaging knowledge	
	Global Engagement, Partnership and Resource Mobilization (GPR)		Internal and External stakeholder events, SSTC	
Corporate Services Support Group (CSSG)	Quality Assurance Group (QAG)	Comments on KM design KM Ratings at design	Internal stocktakes and events	Operational Policy and Strategy Committee (OSC)
Change Delivery and Innovation Unit (CDI)		Innovation platform	Internal and external events	Strategic advice at executive level

Source: CLE mapping

Table 2
Overview of number of publications per year (per series)

Year	Series										Series total	Non-series	Total
	Advantage Series	Impact Assessment	Research Series	Research from the field	Tools	Fact-sheets	In brief	Annual reports	Books and reports				
2023	0	0	2	0	0	13	2	0	0	17	27	44	
2022	1	1	20	0	2	13	6	0	0	43	82	125	
2021	2	0	2	0	8	5	5	1	4	27	64	91	
2020	1	4	3	0	0	20	5	1	8	42	37	79	
2019	4	6	28	0	1	16	16	1	5	77	16	93	
2018	4	5	13	1	5	14	36	1	3	82	18	100	
2017	3	2	13	2	1	28	29	1	1	80	17	97	
2016	3	1	6	0	7	41	42	1	1	102	17	119	
total post-2016	18	19	87	3	24	150	141	6	22	470	278	748	
pre-2016	6	5	2		12	141	147	15	3	331	155	486	
Total	24	24	89	3	36	291	288	21	25	801	433	1234	

Source: CLE analysis.

Table 3
Publications outside series identified through "title"

Title-based type	Description	SKD type
Grant Results Sheets	Consistently formatted 4-page documents presenting results of completed grants, including lessons learned	Grant Results Sheets
ASAP factsheets	Consistently formatted 2-page documents showcasing ASAP planned initiatives in recipient countries	Factsheets
Investing in rural people factsheets	Consistently formatted 4-page documents showcasing IFAD's strategy and operation in beneficiary countries	Factsheets
Partnership factsheets	Consistently formatted 2-page documents showcasing IFAD's partnerships with specific donors	Factsheets
SKD learning notes	The series was initiated in 2022 and only two issues have been published so far – to be further analysed	Learning notes
COVID-19 learning notes	6 of them were published and posted under a single heading, hence they appear as only one product – to be further analysed	Learning notes
Lessons Learned	Most of them are part of consistently formatted toolkits and will hence be considered as part of that series; only two of the more recent ones are not part of toolkits, but are not formatted consistently enough to represent a type	Toolkit
How to do notes	Most of them are part of consistently formatted toolkits and will hence be considered as part of that series; only two of the more recent ones are not part of toolkits, but are not formatted consistently enough to represent a type	Toolkit
Policy briefs	Consistently formatted documents, to be further explored as they may also include other types of documents stemming from	Policy briefs

<i>Title-based type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>SKD type</i>
	grants	
ASAP Technical Series	Fully fledged reports, only two have been published in the CLE period – to be further explored	N/A
IFAD briefing notes	The series was initiated in 2022 and only three issues have been published so far	N/A

Source: CLE analysis.

Table 4

Full list of KM platforms covered by the CLE

<i>Platform</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Media</i>	<i>Audience</i>	<i>URL</i>
IFAD Intranet	Websites	Intranet	Internal	https://intranet.ifad.org/ (last access: 05/01/2024)
Knowledge and Information page	Websites	Intranet	Internal	https://intranet.ifad.org/knowledge-and-information?inheritRedirect=true (last access: 05/01/2024)
IFAD Knowledge Repository	Websites	Intranet	Internal	https://intranet.ifad.org/knowledge-and-information/knowledge-repository?inheritRedirect=true (last access: 05/01/2024)
IFAD Biodiversity Knowledge Platform	Community of Practice	Dgroup	Internal	https://ifad.dgroups.io/g/IFADBiodiversityKnowledge (last access: 05/01/2024)
Cambodia Data Use Community for Agriculture and Rural Development	Community of Practice	Dgroup	Internal	https://ifad.dgroups.io/g/CambodiaDataUseCommunity (last access: 05/01/2024)
Uganda Data Use Community	Community of Practice	Dgroup	Internal	https://ifad.dgroups.io/g/UgandaDataUseCommunity (last access: 05/01/2024)
The Gender Network	Community of Practice	Dgroup	Internal	https://ifad.dgroups.io/g/gender (last access: 05/01/2024)
GEOGROUP	Community of Practice	Dgroup	Internal	https://ifad.dgroups.io/g/GeoGroup (last access: 05/01/2024)
ICT4D CoP	Community of Practice	Dgroup	Internal	https://ifad.dgroups.io/g/ICT4D (last access: 05/01/2024)
IFAD Innovation Network	Community of Practice	Dgroup	Internal	https://ifad.dgroups.io/g/IFADInnovation (last access: 05/01/2024)
Knowledge Management CoP- Ethiopia portfolio	Community of Practice	Dgroup	Internal	https://ifad.dgroups.io/g/KMCoPEthiopia (last access: 05/01/2024)
50x2030 Initiative	Community of Practice	Dgroup	Internal	https://ifad.dgroups.io/g/50x2030Initiative (last access: 05/01/2024)
IFAD Development Practices Community	Community of Practice	Dgroup	Internal	https://ifad.dgroups.io/g/IFADDevelopmentPractices (last access: 05/01/2024)
Farmers' Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP)	Community of Practice	Dgroup	Internal	https://ifad.dgroups.io/g/FO4ACP (last access: 05/01/2024)
ESA Monitoring&Evaluation	Community of Practice	Mailing list	Internal	

<i>Platform</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Media</i>	<i>Audience</i>	<i>URL</i>
CoP				
Land Tenure Updates	Community of Practice	Mailing list	Internal	
OPR group for all IFAD programme officers	Social Media Platforms	MS Teams group	Internal	
ESA group for CDs	Social Media Platforms	MS Teams group	Internal	
GEOGROUP - WhatsApp	Social Media Platforms	WhatsApp Group	Internal	
APR M&E Officers	Social Media Platforms	WhatsApp Group	Internal	
IFAD KM Resource Center	Living Repository		Internal, External	
Philanthropy Learning Lab	Community of Practice	Learning platform	Internal	https://intranet.ifad.org/-/launch-of-ifad-s-philanthropy-learning-l-1 (last access: 05/01/2024)
KM4DEV	Community of Practice	Learning Platform	External	http://www.km4dev.org/ (last access: 05/01/2024)
Multi-Donor Learning Platform	Community of Practice	Learning Platform	External	https://www.mdip4dev.org/ (last access: 05/01/2024)
UNSDG knowledge portal	Community of Practice	Learning Platform	External	https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.html (last access: 05/01/2024)
IFADASIA	Social Media Platforms	Facebook group	External	https://www.facebook.com/groups/ifadasia (last access: 05/01/2024)
FIDAFrique / IFADAfrica	Social Media Platforms	Facebook group	External	https://www.facebook.com/groups/257024485045670/ (last access: 05/01/2024)
EvalForward	Community of Practice	Learning Platform	External	https://www.evalforward.org/user/register (last access: 05/01/2024)
Forum for Agricultural Risk Management in Development (FARM-D)	Network		External	https://www.farm-d.org/ (last access: 05/01/2024)
IFAD social reporting blog	Websites	IFAD Official Website	External	https://reporting2160.rssing.com/chan-35378318/index-latest.php (last access: 05/01/2024)
LAC knowledge platform	Living Repository		External	https://lac-conocimientos-sstc.ifad.org/es/publicaciones (last access: 05/01/2024)
IFAD knowledge webpage	Websites	IFAD Official Website	External	https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/publications (last access: 05/01/2024)
IFAD Impact Assessment Report 2019-2021	Websites	IFAD Official Website	External	https://www.ifad.org/ifad-impact-assessment-report-2021/index.html (last access: 05/01/2024)
Rural Solution Portal	Community of Practice	Learning Platform	External	https://ruralsolutionsportal.org/en/home (last access: 05/01/2024)

<i>Platform</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Media</i>	<i>Audience</i>	<i>URL</i>
LAC Learning Lab	Community of Practice	Learning Platform	Internal	https://intranet.ifad.org/-/lac-kicks-off-its-knowledge-lab (last access: 05/01/2024)
Financing Facility for Remittances (FFR)	Community of Practice	Learning Platform	External	https://www.ifad.org/en/ffr (last access: 05/01/2024)
The Platform for Agricultural Risk Management (PARM)	Network		External	https://www.p4arm.org/ (last access: 05/01/2024)
The Smallholder and Agri-SME Finance and Investment Network (SAFIN)	Network		External	https://www.safinetwork.org/ (last access: 05/01/2024)
Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD)	Network		External	https://www.donorplatform.org/ (last access: 05/01/2024)
Operation Academy (OPAC)	Websites	Intranet	Internal	https://intranet.ifad.org/opac (last access: 05/01/2024)
Learning Management System	Community of Practice	Learning Platform	Internal	https://ifad.csod.com/client/ifad/default.aspx (last access: 05/01/2024)
NDA Partnership platform	Community of Practice	Learning Platform	External	https://www.ifad.org/en/ndapp (last access: 05/01/2024)
GALS platform	Community of Practice	Learning Platform	External	https://empoweratscale.org/ (last access: 05/01/2024)

Source: CLE analysis.

Table 5

Full list of KM practices and tools identified by 20 country case studies

<i>Generation</i>	<i>Practices/tools</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Countries</i>
6	Inclusion of community groups in SSTC activities	1	Pakistan
6	Farmer Field Schools (FFS)	8	Philippines, Pakistan, Madagascar, Angola, Kenya, Brazil, Egypt, DRC
6	Participatory Thematic Roundtables	1	Argentina
6	Sub-regional Agriculture CoP	2	Vietnam, Argentina
6	Agro-ecological Notebooks (Cadernetas Agroecológicas)	1	Brazil
6	Indigenous knowledge consulted and leveraged by projects	5	Pakistan, Kenya, Peru, Mexico, Sudan
6	Documentation and dissemination of indigenous and local knowledge	1	Peru
6	KM ecosystem platform for rural youth	1	Brazil
6	Inclusion of CSOs and marginalized groups in Policy Engagement activities	2	Philippines, Pakistan
6	Community Knowledge-based Peer Networks	1	Sudan
6	Hosted Mekong Knowledge and Learning Fair	1	Vietnam
5	Participatory research or project implementation	12	Vietnam, Philippines, Pakistan, China, Madagascar, Argentina, Brazil, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, Sudan, Egypt, Côte D'Ivoire

<i>Generation</i>	<i>Practices/tools</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Countries</i>
5	Capturing and disseminating practical farmer level case studies	1	Vietnam
5	SKiM KM Symposium	1	Sudan
5	Participatory KM strategies and action plan	1	Philippines
5	Farmer Business Schools	1	Philippines
5	Training of trainers/local Champions	6	Vietnam, Philippines, Pakistan, China, Madagascar, Nigeria
5	Community learning centres (CLC)	1	Madagascar
5	ICT-based extension services/ e-extension	4	China, Malawi, Egypt, Nigeria
5	Exchange visits and workshops with farmers; capacity-building for beneficiaries	16	Philippines, Pakistan, China, Malawi, Madagascar, Angola, Kenya, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Tunisia, Sudan, DRC, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Côte D'Ivoire
5	Beneficiary needs assessment workshops	3	Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Côte D'Ivoire
5	District meetings with local stakeholders for feedback	2	Pakistan, Sierra Leone
5	Establishment of KM core group	1	Sudan
5	Thematic CoPs/Forums	6	Vietnam, Malawi, Madagascar, Argentina, Peru, Sudan
5	"Collaboration with local universities and NGOs on Knowledge products"	7	Pakistan, China, Malawi, Mexico, Kyrgyzstan, Egypt, Sierra Leone
5	KM & learning routes/Learning Territories	6	Vietnam, Madagascar, Kenya, Argentina, Brazil, Sudan, Côte D'Ivoire0065
5	Scheduled coverage on cross-cutting themes by local television and newspapers	1	Vietnam
5	Launch of Agricultural Gender Network	2	Philippines, Nigeria
4	Promotion of digital agriculture applications	1	Egypt
4	Project Steering Committees/Regular technical meetings with the government and partners	5	Vietnam, Pakistan, Mexico, Sudan, Côte D'Ivoire
4	ICT4D working group on WhatsApp	1	Nigeria
4	SSTC exchanges	3	Pakistan, China, Argentina
4	Leverage technology such as live streams	1	Kenya
4	Dissemination through social media: WhatsApp group; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn	16	Vietnam, Pakistan, Malawi, Madagascar, Angola, Kenya, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, Sudan, Egypt, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Côte D'Ivoire
4	Project Field Visits/supervision missions	15	Vietnam, Philippines, Pakistan, China, Malawi, Madagascar, Angola, Brazil, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, Sudan, Egypt, DRC, Sierra Leone, Côte D'Ivoire
4	Project After Action Reviews	1	Nigeria
4	Public awareness campaigns	2	Malawi, Kyrgyzstan
4	Cross-project learning activities/exchange visits/study tours	17	Philippines, Pakistan, China, Malawi, Madagascar, Angola,

<i>Generation</i>	<i>Practices/tools</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Countries</i>
			Kenya, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, Sudan, DRC, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Côte D'Ivoire
4	Replication of partner interventions/Leveraging knowledge from project partners	2	Egypt, Côte D'Ivoire
4	Systematic Knowledge Sharing through various channels	2	Pakistan, Côte D'Ivoire
4	Farming extension activities	3	Vietnam, Argentina, Egypt
4	Lessons learned shared with all stakeholders	3	Philippines, Mexico, Sudan
3	Organization of knowledge sharing forums	2	Mexico, Nigeria
3	Co-chair Donor Working Group	1	Nigeria
3	Project Experience Capitalization	4	Mexico, Tunisia, Sierra Leone, Côte D'Ivoire
3	Agriculture/trade Exhibitions	2	Philippines, Angola
3	Thematic workshops/ KM seminars and workshops/Webinars	7	Vietnam, Malawi, Kenya, Mexico, DRC, Nigeria, Côte D'Ivoire
3	Project Websites	12	Vietnam, Pakistan, China, Madagascar, Angola, Kenya, Argentina, Brazil, Tunisia, Sudan, Egypt, DRC
3	Technical thematic knowledge products/research and publication	11	Philippines, Pakistan, China, Kenya, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Mexico, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Côte D'Ivoire
3	Collecting and communications success stories and best practices through newsletters, videos, etc	20	Vietnam, Philippines, Pakistan, China, Malawi, Madagascar, Angola, Kenya, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Mexico, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, Sudan, Egypt, DRC, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Côte D'Ivoire
3	High-level KM practices influencing policy (Policy Briefs/Policy dialogue workshop)	9	Vietnam, Philippines, Pakistan, Madagascar, Kenya, Tunisia, Egypt, Nigeria, Côte D'Ivoire
3	Documentation of Success Stories, Best Practices, Case studies	12	Vietnam, Pakistan, Madagascar, Angola, Kenya, Argentina, Brazil, Sudan, Egypt, DRC, Sierra Leone, Nigeria
3	Documentation of Lessons Learned	9	Philippines, Madagascar, Angola, Kenya, Peru, Brazil, Mexico, Egypt, DRC
3	Project-level Manuals/guides	5	Vietnam, China, Angola, DRC, Côte D'Ivoire
3	Stock-taking and knowledge systematization	1	Argentina
3	Curation of knowledge products on gov-run websites	4	Pakistan, China, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan
3	Broadcasting on local TVs and radios; podcasts; vocal SMSs	11	Vietnam, Pakistan, Malawi, Angola, Brazil, Tunisia, Sudan, DRC, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Côte D'Ivoire
2	Rome-based Agency Technical Coordination Group (RBA-TCG)	1	Kenya
2	Periodic Project review/reflection workshops and webinars	15	Vietnam, Philippines, Pakistan, China, Malawi, Madagascar,

Generation	Practices/tools	Frequency	Countries
			Angola, Kenya, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Mexico, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, Sudan, Egypt, DRC, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Côte D'Ivoire
2	KM training to Project staff	5	Philippines, China, Malawi, Madagascar, Kenya
2	Direct technical support by TTLs	1	Egypt
2	KM strategy/action plan	11	Pakistan, Malawi, Madagascar, Angola, Argentina, Tunisia, Egypt, DRC, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Côte D'Ivoire
2	Participation in KM Working groups/knowledge sharing forums	5	Vietnam, Pakistan, Kenya, Peru, Mexico
2	Participation in IFAD CoPs	2	Philippines, Côte D'Ivoire
2	Participation in global high-level events	5	Philippines, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Côte D'Ivoire
2	Partnerships with media organizations	2	China, Nigeria
2	Participation in Development partners forums/donor working group	6	China, Malawi, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, Egypt
2	COSOP Review	6	Vietnam, Madagascar, Angola, Brazil, Tunisia, Sudan
2	Synchronised M&E/MIS and KM systems/Eliciting M&E data for knowledge products	6	Philippines, Pakistan, Malawi, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia
1	Online-based document storage systems (Dropbox; Kobo Toolbox; Google Drive)	10	Philippines, Pakistan, Malawi, Madagascar, Angola, Kenya, Brazil, DRC, Sierra Leone, Côte D'Ivoire
1	Information Resource Centre/library	5	Pakistan, Malawi, Madagascar, Kenya, Tunisia
1	Market information system	1	DRC
1	Web-platform and apps /communication and KM platform	4	Philippines, Pakistan, Mexico, Nigeria
1	County/project-level dashboard	2	Pakistan, Kenya
1	Data collection and tracking tools/Use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS)	5	Pakistan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, Egypt

Source: CLE 20 country case studies.

Table 6

Data for cost effectiveness of knowledge products.

Products	No. of products	Total No. of views	Average of views	Views category	Average cost	Cost category
Research series	87	195051	2241.97	Low	\$ 850	Low
Investing in rural people factsheets	56	167401	2989.30	Low	\$ 17 731	Medium
Toolkit	44	147506	3352.41	Low	\$ 15 800	Medium
Advantage series	18	134368	7464.89	Medium	\$ 16 100	Medium
Impact assessment	18	97802	5433.44	Medium	\$ 350 000	High
Policy brief	12	107773	8981.08	Medium	\$ 7 250	Low
Annual report	7	106267	15181.00	High	\$ 85 000	Medium

Products	No. of products	Total No. of views	Average of views	Views category	Average cost	Cost category
SOFI	6	9455	1575.83	Low	\$ 20 000	Medium
Rural Development Report	3	62085	20695.00	High	\$ 1 200 000	High

Source: views data was provided by ICT. Average cost was estimated based on IOE interviews. Cost estimates are intended as 'ballpark figures' and don't claim to be precise estimates.

Table 7

Data for cost effectiveness of knowledge practices.

Generation	Practices	Frequency (No. of countries)	Effectiveness (No. of countries)	Effectiveness Category	Success Rate	Success Rate Category	Average cost (per each product)	Cost Category
4	Cross-project learning activities/exchange visits/study tours	17	6	Low	35%	Medium	Between 5 000 and 15 000	Medium
4	Outreach via social media	16	0	Low	0%	Low	Free	Low
2	Periodic Project review/reflection workshops and webinars	15	5	Medium	33%	Medium	Between 20 000 to 25 000	Medium
4	Project Field Visits/Supervision Missions	15	3	Low	20%	Medium	Between 50 000 and 60 000	Medium
5	Participatory research or project implementation	12	9	Medium	75%	High	Between 50 000 and 300 000	High
3	Documentation of Success Stories, Best Practices, Case studies & Communication products	12	0	Low	0%	Low	Between 3 000 (for a light product) and 10 000	Low
3	Broadcasting on local TVs and radios; podcasts; vocal SMSs	11	2	Low	18%	Medium	Between 3 000 and 15 000 (or free)	Low
3	Project Websites	11	0	Low	0%	Low	Between 300 and 1000	Low
3	Technical thematic knowledge products/research and publication	11	0	Low	0%	Low	Between 10 000 to 15 000	Low
2	KM strategy/action plan	10	0	Low	0%	Low	25 000	Medium
6	Farmer Field Schools (FFS)	9	3	Low	33%	Medium	1 000 for 1 day of session	Low

Source: Cost estimates are intended as 'ballpark figures' and don't claim to be precise estimates. Effectiveness and success rate are based on the CLE's assessment of these practices in its country case studies.

Table 8
Mapping of IFAD publications to type of knowledge.

<i>Document type (website)</i>	<i>Series</i>	<i>Type of products</i>	<i>Type of knowledge</i>
Series	Research series	Research	Technical knowledge
	Advantage series	Research	Technical knowledge
	Results from the Field series	Research	Technical knowledge
Research	N/A	Research	Technical knowledge
Books	N/A	Research	Technical knowledge
Papers and Briefs	N/A	Research	Technical knowledge
	N/A	Report	Technical knowledge
	N/A	Policy brief	Policy knowledge
Tools and guidelines	Toolkit	Tools and guidelines	Technical knowledge
How to do note	Toolkit	How to do note	Technical knowledge
Lessons learned	Toolkit	Lessons learned	Technical knowledge
Case study	N/A	Case study	Experiential knowledge
	N/A	Policy case study	Policy knowledge
Annual reports	Annual reports	Report	Technical knowledge
Series	Impact assessments	Not included in the mapping	
In Brief	Not included in the mapping		
Factsheets	Not included in the mapping		

Source: CLE analysis.

Glossary of Terms Used¹²⁶

Brokering	Brokering, or knowledge brokering, is concerned with linking multiple types of knowledge that are important in international development. Knowledge brokers act as cognitive bridges between these different types of knowledge, but many actors are knowledge brokers without necessarily identifying themselves as such.
Coloniality of knowledge	Coloniality is defined as the entrenched power dynamics that have emerged from the historical power relations of colonial domination. These power dynamics continue to have implications for patterns of knowledge creation and use, such as the undervaluing of local knowledge and indigenous knowledge. The inverse of this state is the Decolonization of knowledge, which aims to reverse this dynamic.
Communities of practice	Informal (spontaneous) and formal (intentionally created by organizations) groups of professionals, known as practitioners, within a specific thematic domain. Through time and sustained interaction, they develop a practice, or a shared repertoire of resources, experiences, stories, KM tools and ways of addressing recurring problems, namely a shared practice.
Experience capitalization	a KM method for learning and exchange involving a process by which a specific project or programme (or "an experience" in general) is described and analysed, and from which lessons are identified, shared and used.
External knowledge	Policy knowledge, scientific knowledge, technical knowledge, local knowledge, and indigenous knowledge
Internal knowledge	Explicit (written down, accessible and easy to share), implicit (practical application of explicit) and tacit (organizational, based on personal experience and context, less easy to express) knowledge. This knowledge is invested in individual members of staff as practices but also carried by KM tools and products.
Knowledge	Awareness, understanding, or information that has been obtained by experience or study, and that is either in a person's mind or possessed by people generally
Knowledge management	For this CLE, Knowledge management is defined as: The systematic management of the generation, sharing, use and brokering of substantive knowledge through tools and practices at organizational and individual levels with a view to enhance IFAD's role and contribution to rural transformation globally and in partner countries.
Knowledge management for development	Since the late 1990s, knowledge management has been widely adopted in international development as the sub-discipline of knowledge management for development (KM4D). ¹²⁷ It has also been widely implemented by IFIs and UN organizations, including IFAD. ¹²⁸ It includes a prominent community of practice of the same name, KM4Dev.
Knowledge management practices	A shared repertoire of resources developed by practitioners, including experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems. KM practices relate to 'how' knowledge is generated, shared, used and brokered by IFAD. These practices involve personal and organization choices, behaviours and insights of individual staff, organizational units and the organization as a whole, both formally and informally.
Knowledge partnerships	Partnerships that are either focus on learning and coordination of knowledge and knowledge management (MDLP, KM4Dev) or thematic efforts at knowledge sharing, such as communities of practice. These partnerships can be global, regional or local, and involve either formal partnerships with other development organizations or informal efforts to share knowledge by individuals in other development organizations and the grassroots actors. These partnerships provide the opportunity for IFAD staff to influence the international and national policy and development agenda, leverage financial

¹²⁶ The definitions in this glossary have been purposely collected for this CLE and do not always have universal application.

¹²⁷ Kalseth and Cummings, 2000; Cummings et al, 2013

¹²⁸ Dumitriu, 2016; Bocock and Collinson, 2022

resources, enable country-led development processes, generate knowledge and innovation, strengthen engagement with all actors, including the private sector, and enhance visibility of IFAD and its expertise.

Communities of practice are one form of knowledge partnership which can also cover the whole subset of activities described above.

Rural transformation	Comprehensive socio-economic changes, embedding considerations of equity and power relations, in areas where IFAD has been investing heavily, namely: promoting diversification and resilience; advancing gender equality and empowering women; building sustainable food systems by creating opportunities for smallholders; and enhancing rural-urban connectivity and linkages. It involves changes which reach beyond project boundaries, generating multi-level (local, subnational, national and global) and cross-sectoral links which can ultimately contribute to systems-change.
Storytelling	A KM method for learning and exchange which is employed to create an authentic, experienced based narrative to illuminate complex problems and deeper truths. ¹²⁹
Contextual Knowledge	The knowledge of particular circumstances of time and place in which work is carried out.
Experiential Knowledge	Knowledge gained through direct experience, such as that of project implementation, rather than formal or informal training.
Indigenous knowledge	Cumulative, complex bodies of knowledge, knowhow, practices and representations that are maintained and developed by indigenous peoples with extended histories of interaction with the natural environment. These cognitive systems include language, attachment to place, spirituality and world view. ¹³⁰ Indigenous communities also have specific local knowledges. Indigenous knowledge is usually not written down or codified but can be captured on video.
Local knowledge	A dynamic system of knowledge which belongs to a living community, and which is relevant to local society, although it may express itself in local and ethnic modes. It is social and people centred, represents a community's distinctive resources and capacities, and recognizes the importance of multiple knowledges. ¹³¹ Synonyms include endogenous knowledge, rural people's knowledge and traditional knowledge. This knowledge is often not written down or codified but can be captured on video or through conversations with local people.
Multiple knowledges	Different types of knowledges (local, indigenous, technical, scientific, practical etc), derived from different knowledge cultures, which are needed to address complex problems of sustainable development in a holistic manner. This conception does not recognise a hierarchy in these different knowledges but rather argues that all are needed to solve complex problems. ¹³²
Practical knowledge	Knowledge acquired by day-to-day hands-on experiences, gained by doing things. It is often not written down but can be written into how-to manuals. Experts, for example, will acquire practical knowledge over time to add to their store of technical and scientific knowledge. Farmers also have practical knowledge.
Scientific knowledge	Knowledge derived from the sciences (including social and technical sciences), based on the observation and classification of facts with the goal of establishing verifiable knowledge derived through induction and hypothesis. It represents the knowledge accumulated by systematic study and organized by general principles and is published in scientific articles and books. Although itself scientific, new trends of transdisciplinary study are increasingly recognizing the importance of multiple knowledges to solve complex problems, undermining the hierarchy in

¹²⁹ <https://ifadkmcentre.weebly.com/storytelling.html>

¹³⁰ derived from UNESCO, 2021

¹³¹ Cummings, 2016

¹³² Brown, 2008, 2011

	which scientific knowledge alone is seen as the best knowledge in all contexts. ¹³³
Substantive knowledge	For the purposes of the CLE, 'substantive' refers to knowledge, which is of particular priority for IFAD, based on the assumption that some knowledges are more important than others.
Technical knowledge	Professional knowhow of experts for solving agricultural challenges in the field or in policy. Examples of technical knowledge include, for example, IFAD's signature solutions. Technical knowledge is often founded on scientific knowledge but includes additional aspects of practical knowledge from implementation in the real world. It is published as best practices and technical notes.
'Wicked' problems	'Wicked' problems are socially embedded, complex problems, such as climate change and sustainable development, which cannot be solved with linear solutions and often require multiple knowledges. ¹³⁴

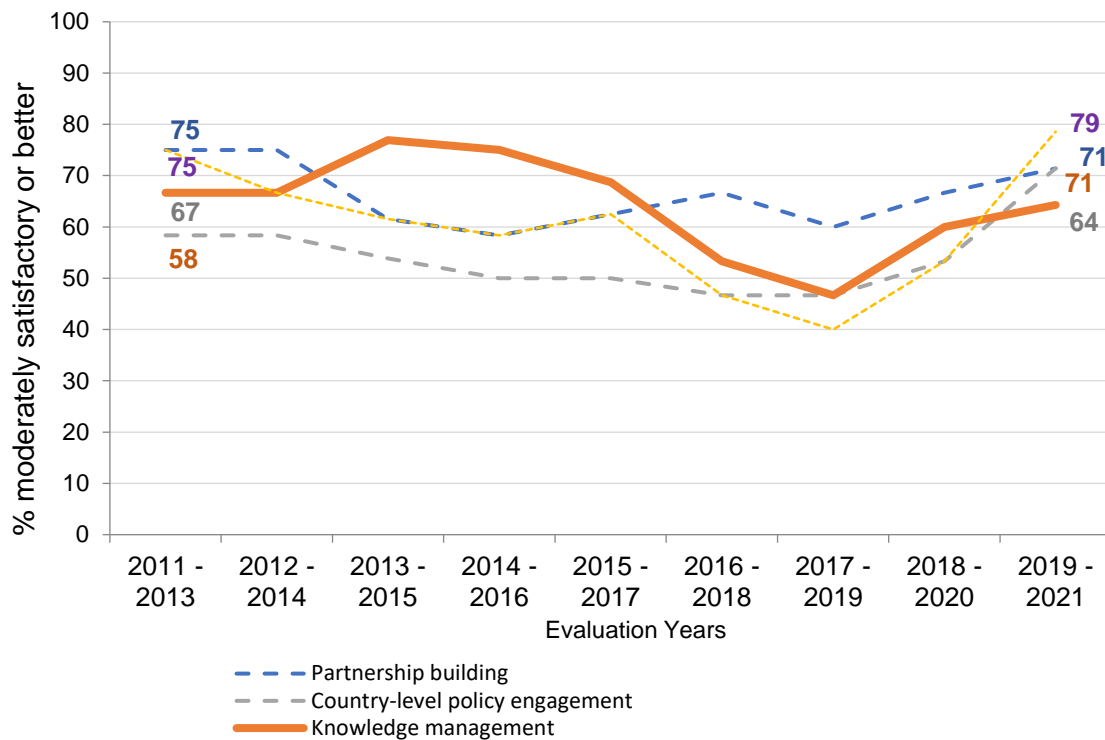
¹³³ Brown et al, 2010

¹³⁴ Rittel and Weber, 1973

Supporting figures and graphs

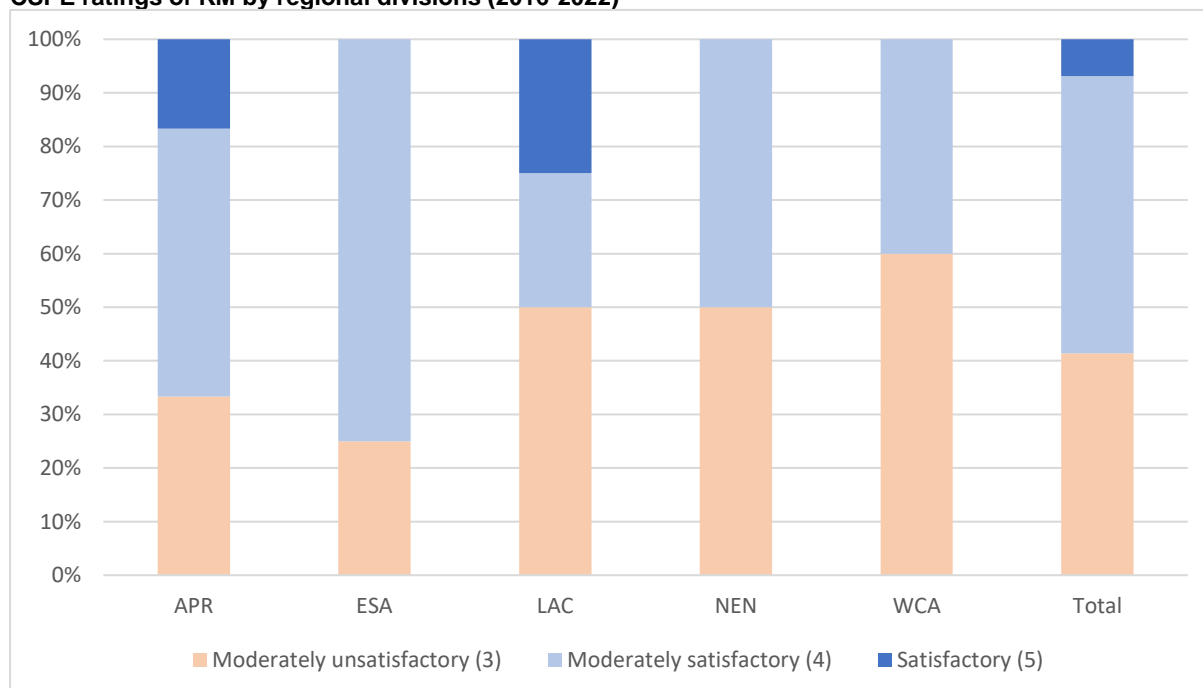
A. Corporate KM performance, knowledge products and platforms

Figure 1
CSPE ratings of non-lending activities



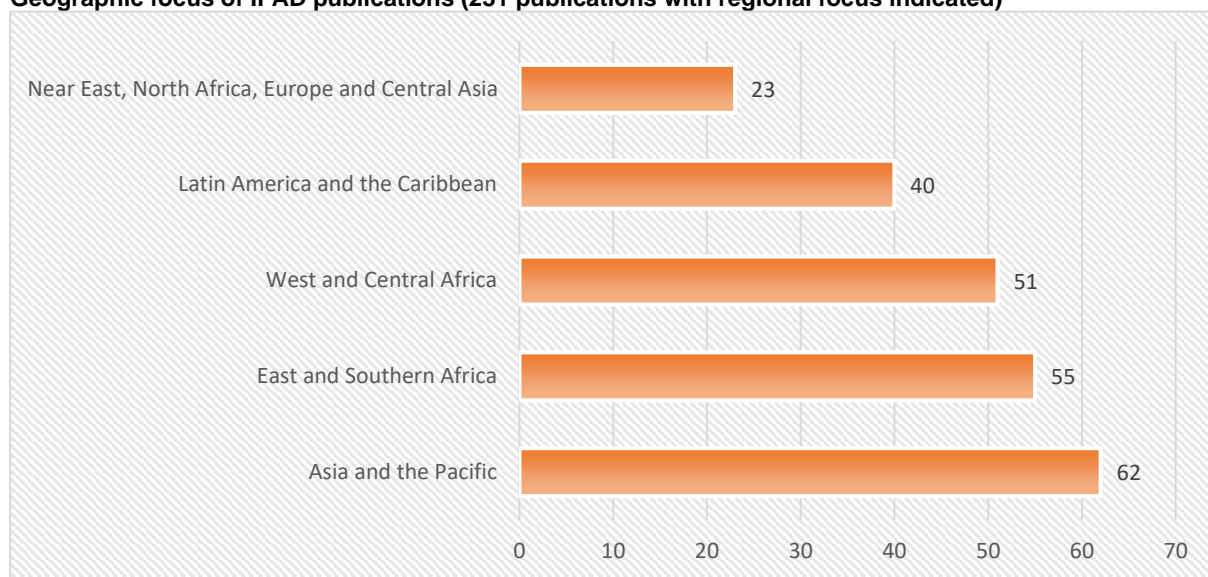
Source: ARRI database.

Figure 2
CSPE ratings of KM by regional divisions (2016-2022)



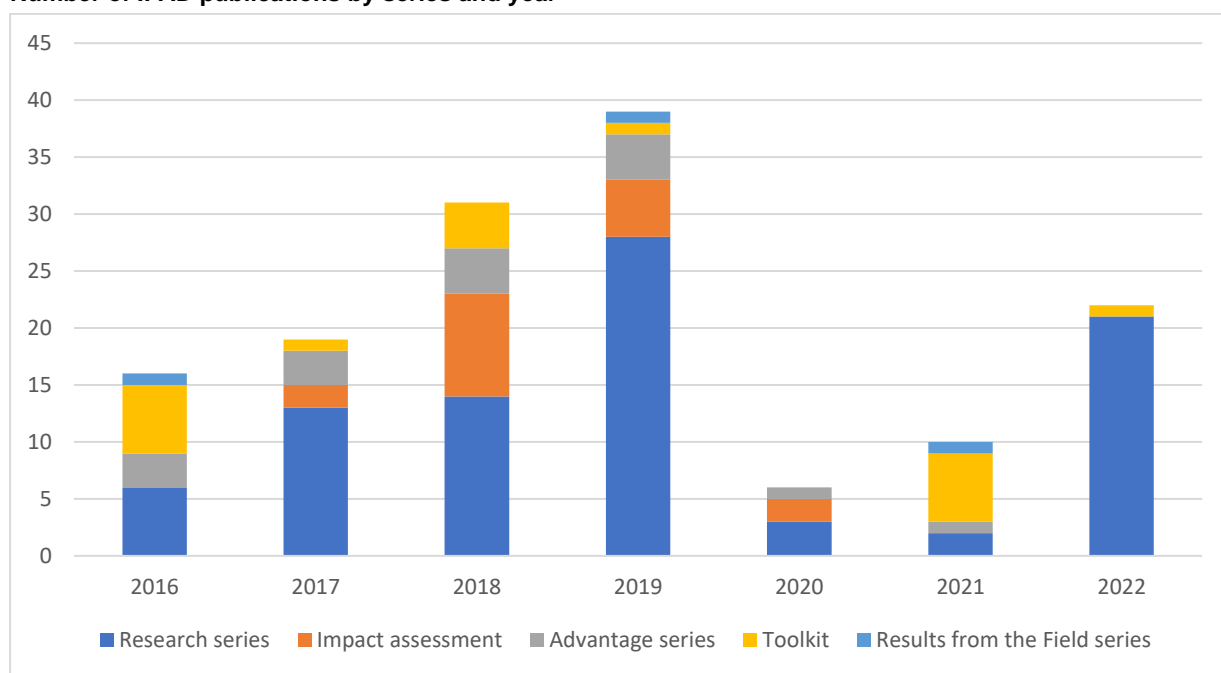
Source: ARRI database.

Figure 3
Geographic focus of IFAD publications (231 publications with regional focus indicated)



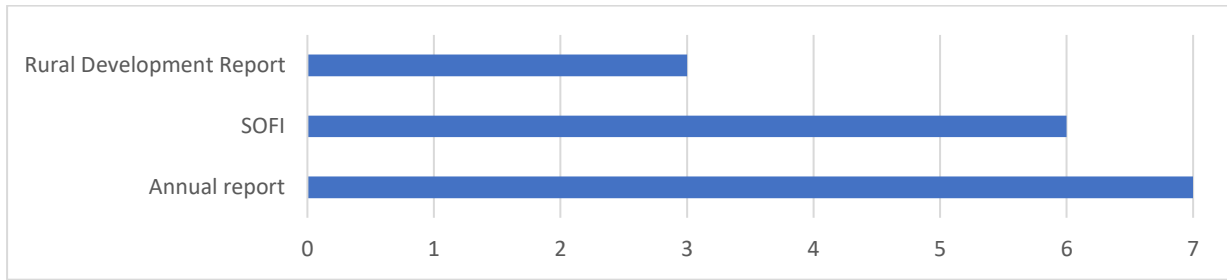
Source: CLE analysis on ICT database

Figure 4
Number of IFAD publications by series and year



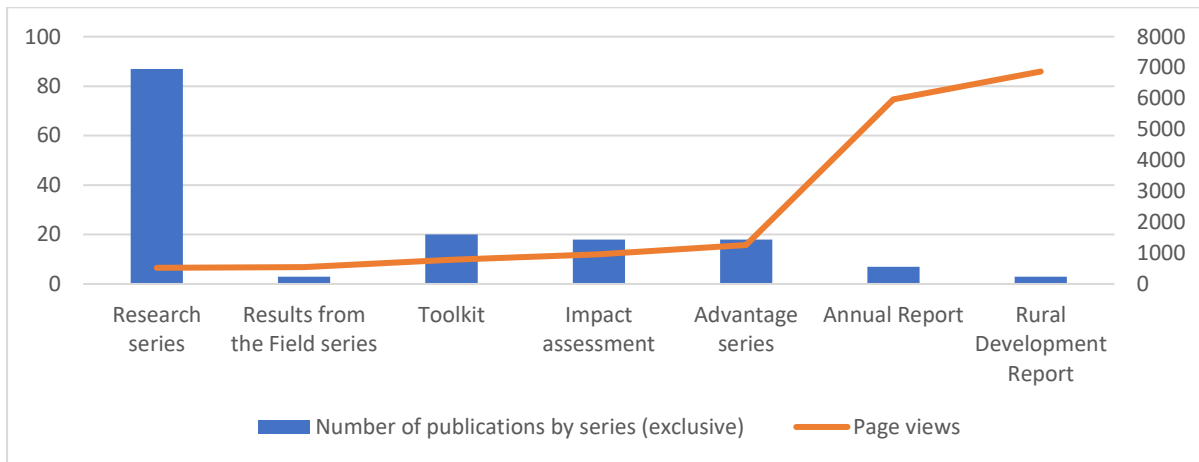
Source: CLE analysis on ICT database

Figure 5
Number of publication entries – Flagships



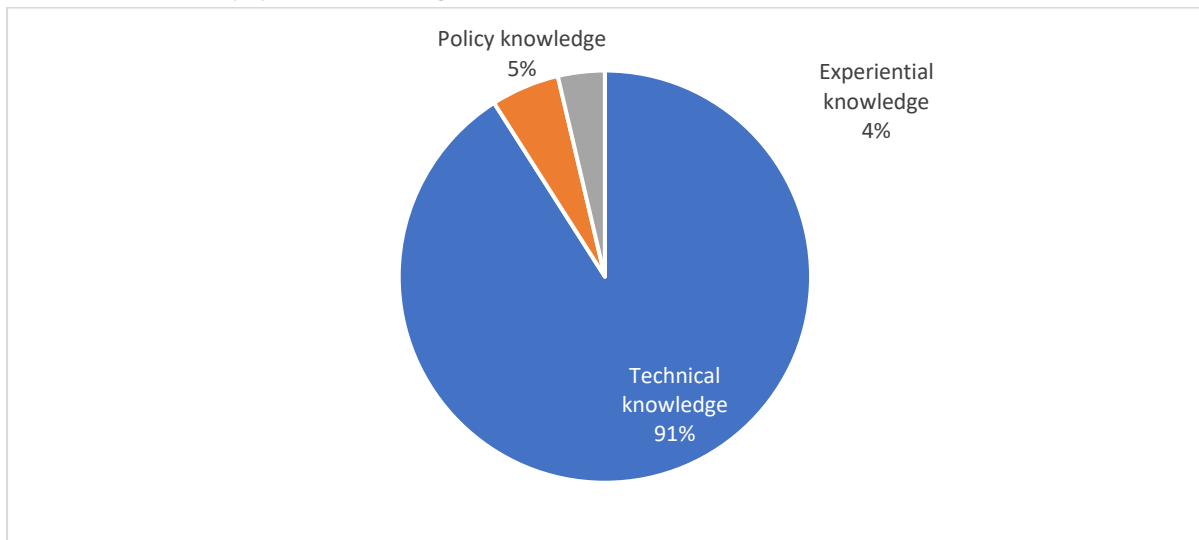
Source: CLE analysis on ICT database

Figure 6
Number of IFAD publications and page views by series



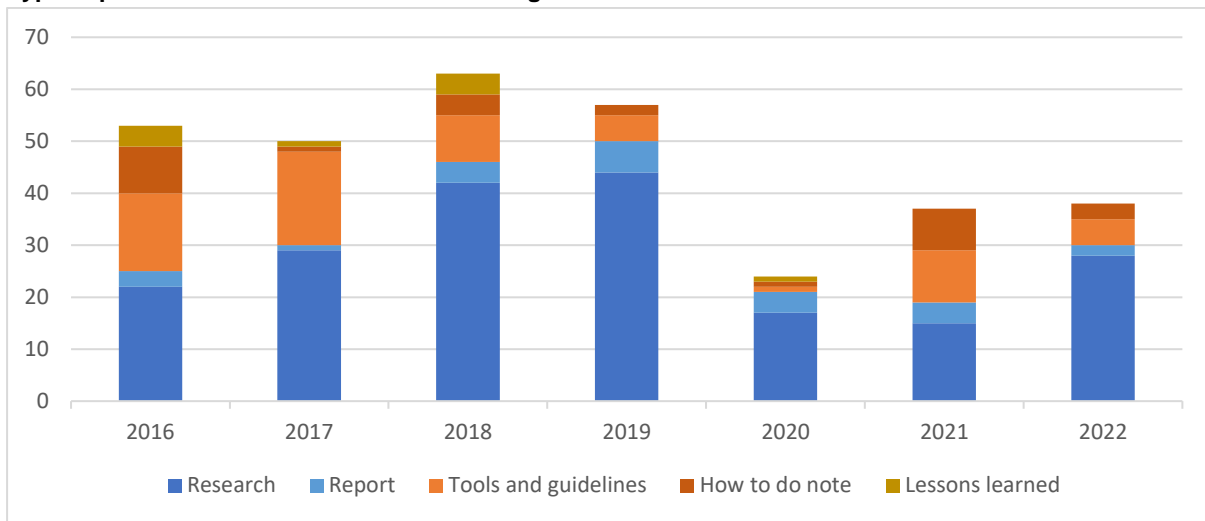
Source: CLE analysis on ICT database

Figure 7
IFAD publications by type of knowledge.



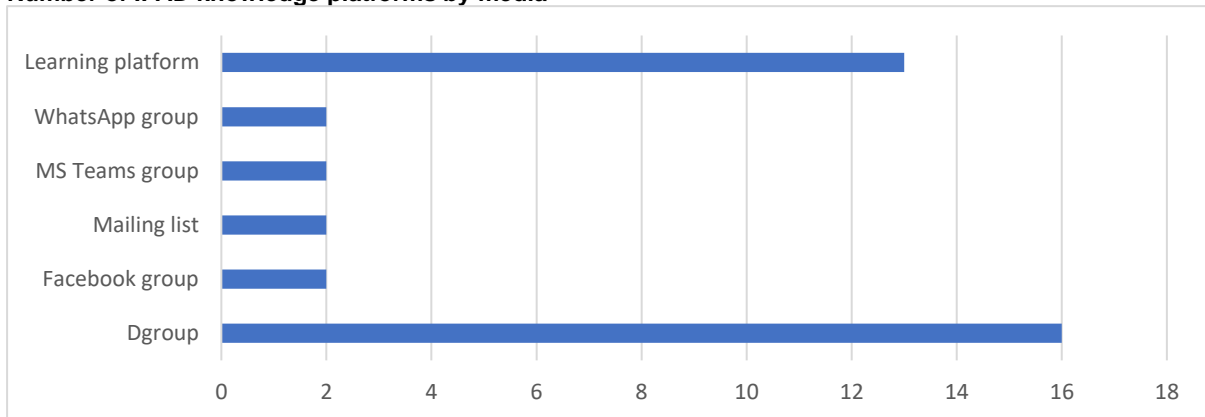
Source: CLE analysis on ICT database and CLE mapping (table 8 in Annex III)

Figure 8
Type of publications under technical knowledge.



Source: CLE analysis on ICT database and CLE mapping (table 8 in Annex III)

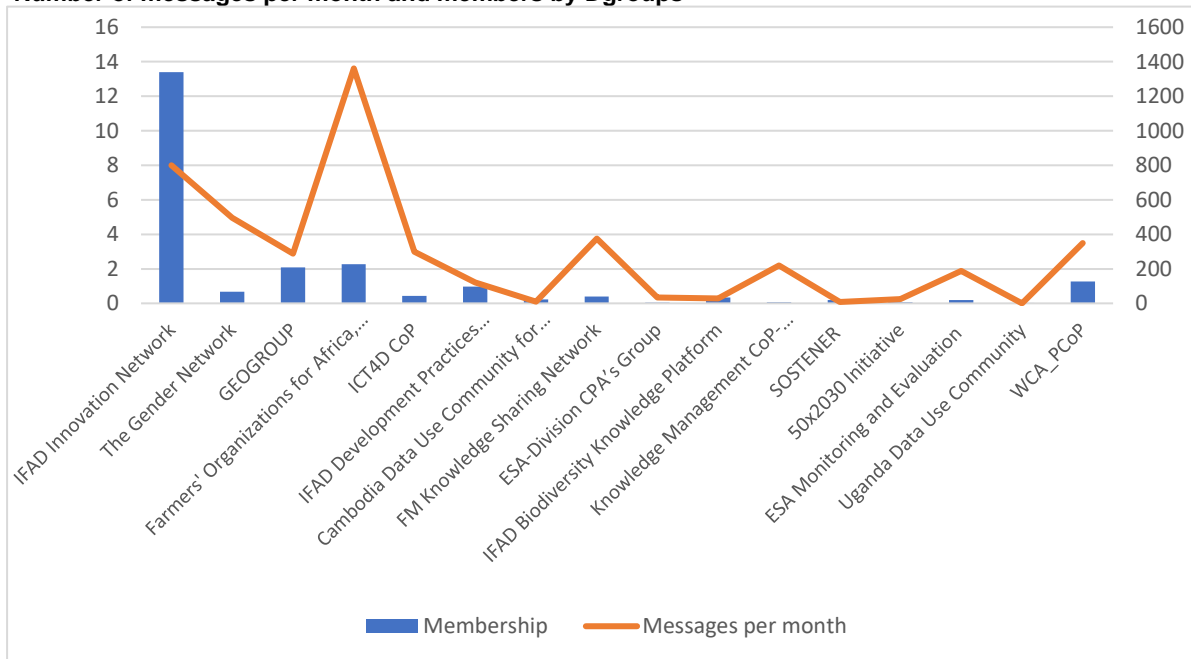
Figure 9
Number of IFAD knowledge platforms by media



Source: CLE analysis

Figure10

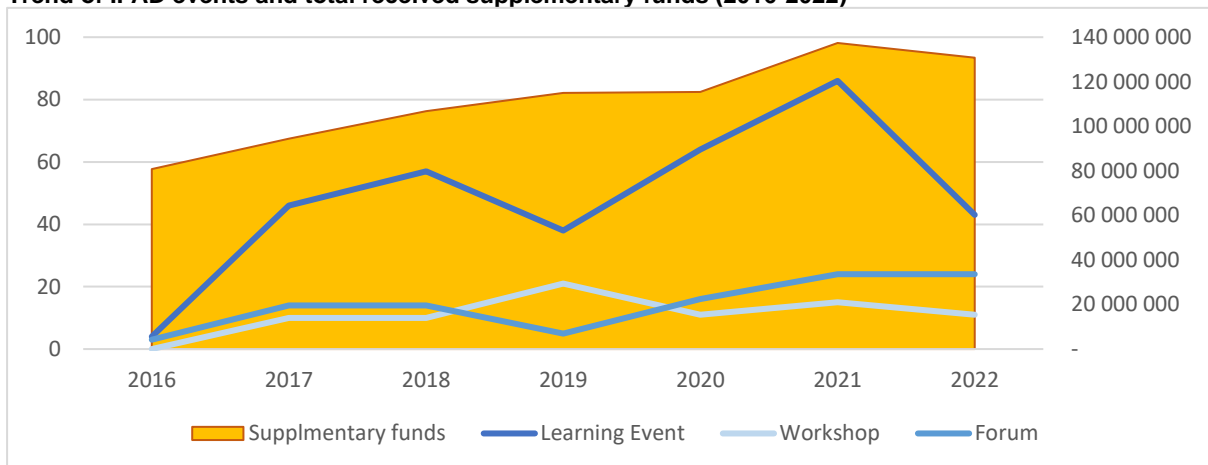
Number of messages per month and members by Dgroups



Source: CLE analysis

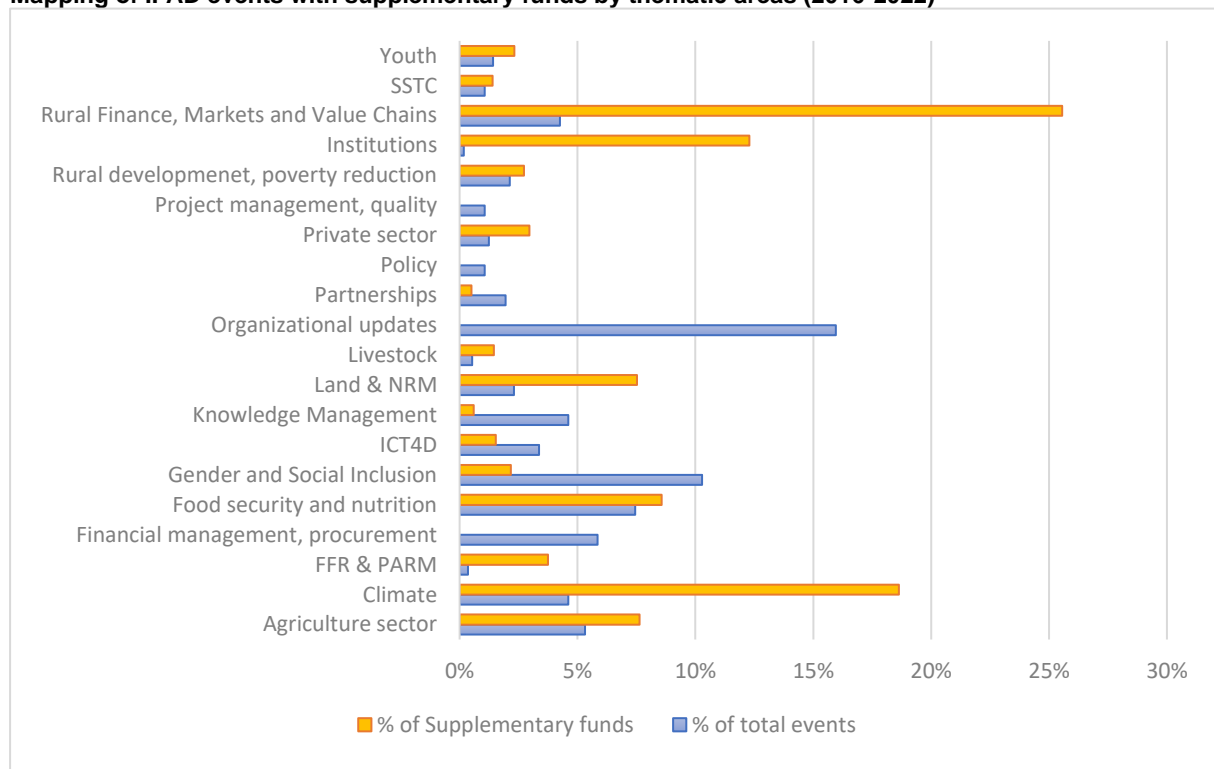
Figure 11

Trend of IFAD events and total received supplementary funds (2016-2022)



Source: CLE analysis

Figure 12
Mapping of IFAD events with supplementary funds by thematic areas (2016-2022)



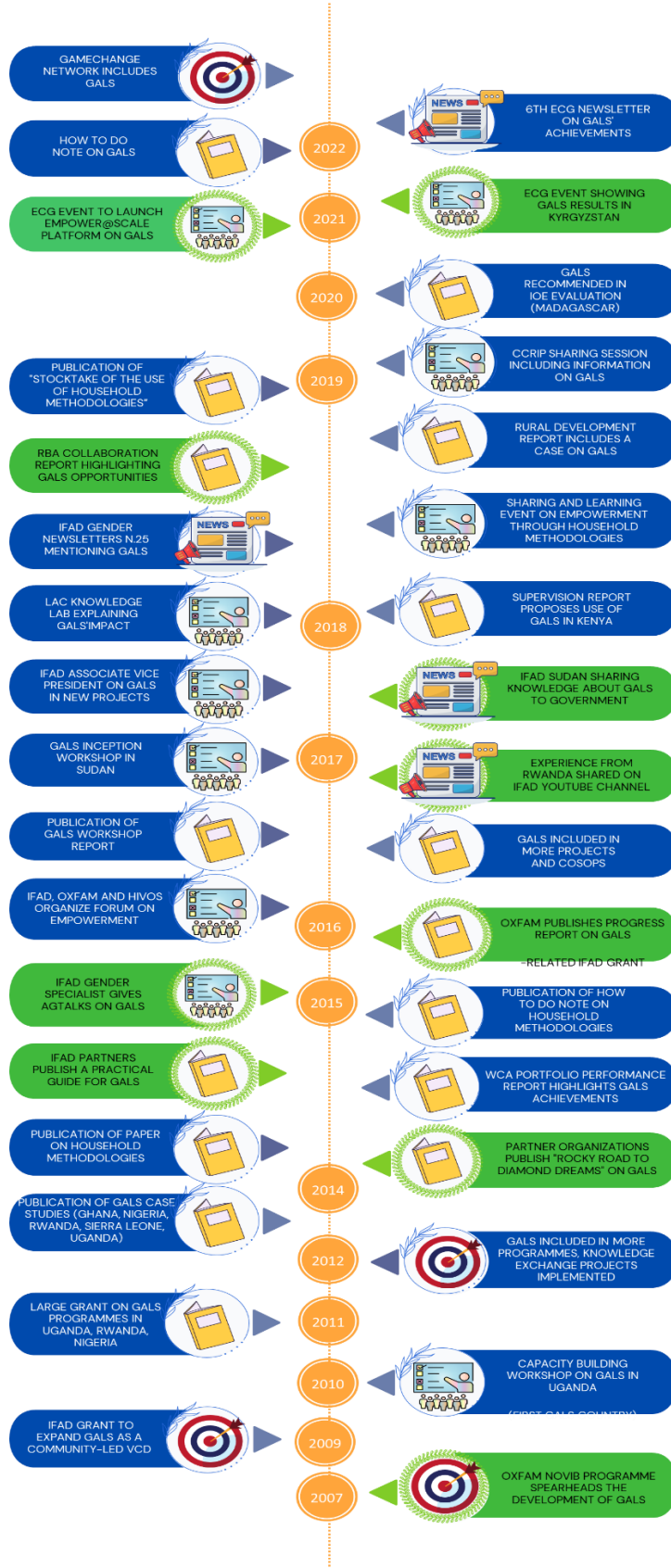
Source: CLE analysis

Figure 13
IFAD's signature solution dissemination over evaluation period (2016-2023)

13.1. Ways of knowledge sharing and dissemination

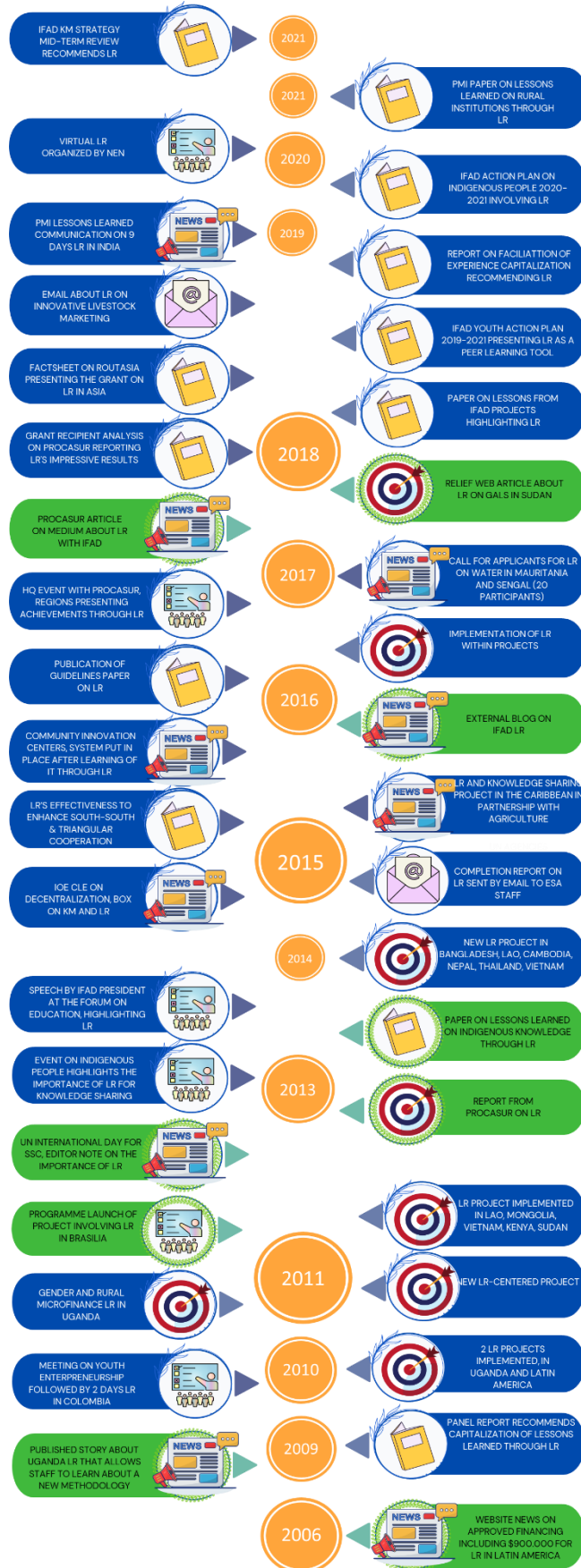


13.2. Gender Action Learning System (GALS)



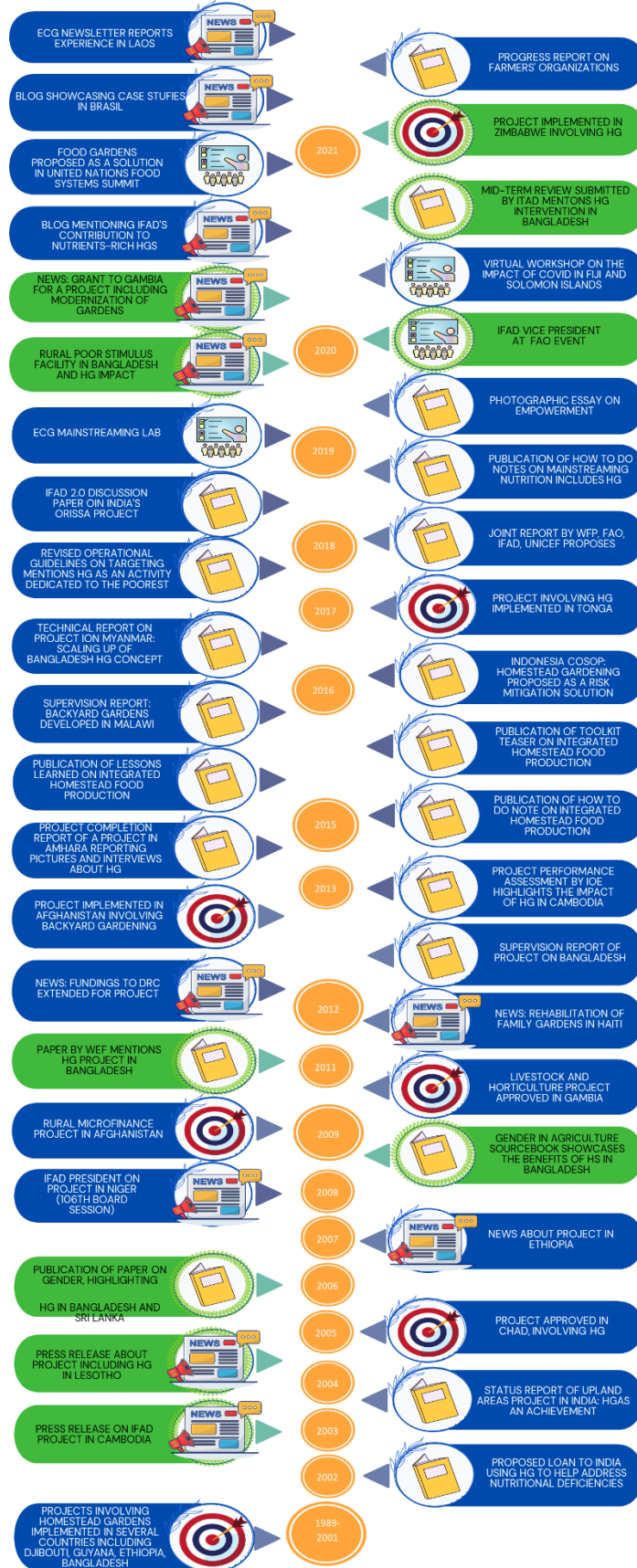
Source: CLE analysis

13.3. Learning Routes



Source: CLE analysis

13.4. Homestead gardens



Source: CLE analysis

13.5. Public-Private-Producer Partnerships (4Ps)



Source: CLE analysis

13.6. Small scale irrigation

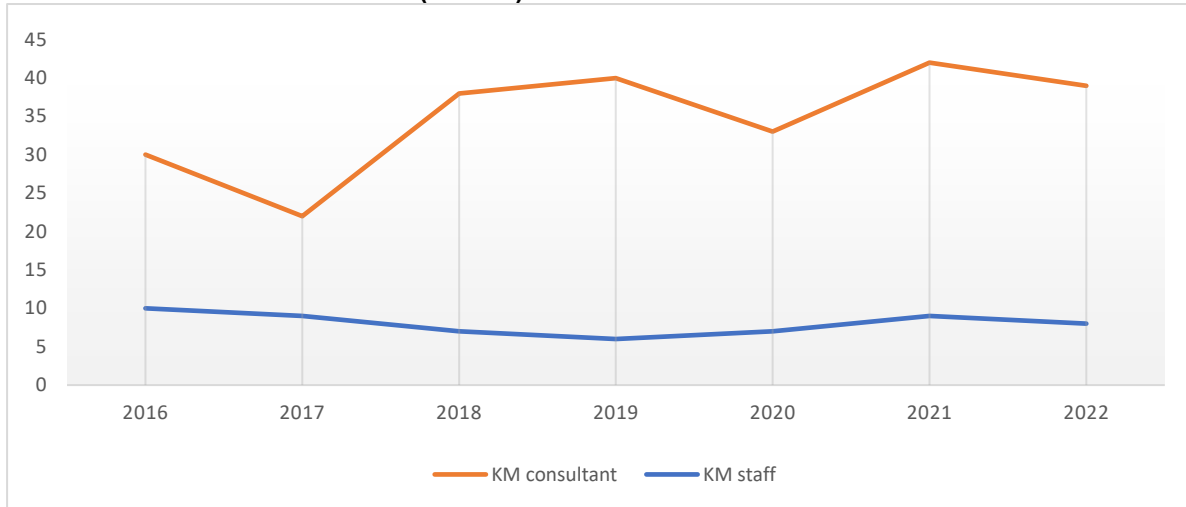


Source: CLE analysis

B. Human and financial resources for KM

Figure 14

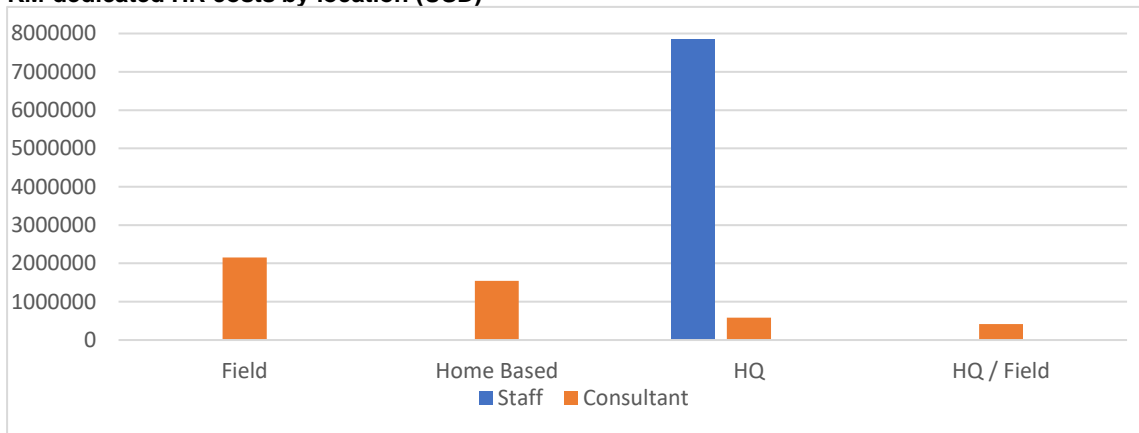
KM-dedicated head count over time (number)



Source: CLE analysis on HR data

Figure 15

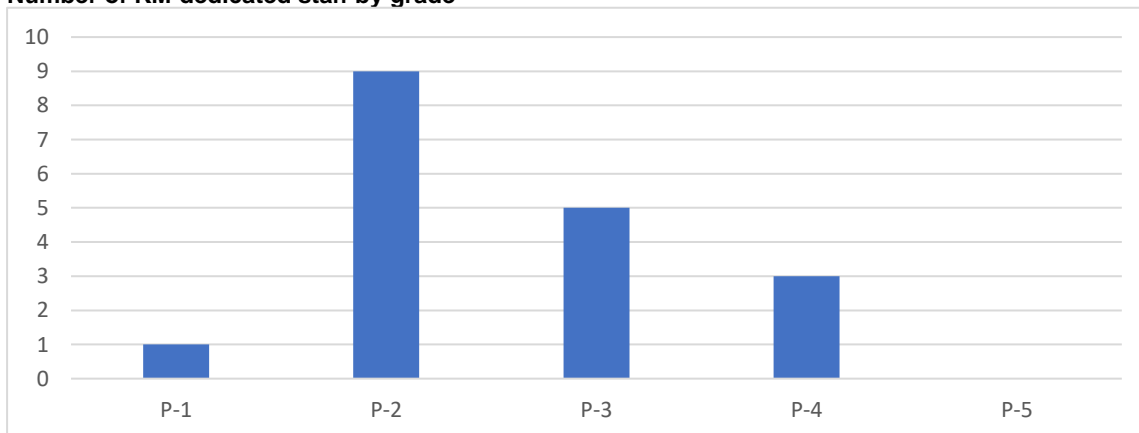
KM-dedicated HR costs by location (USD)



Source: CLE analysis on HR data

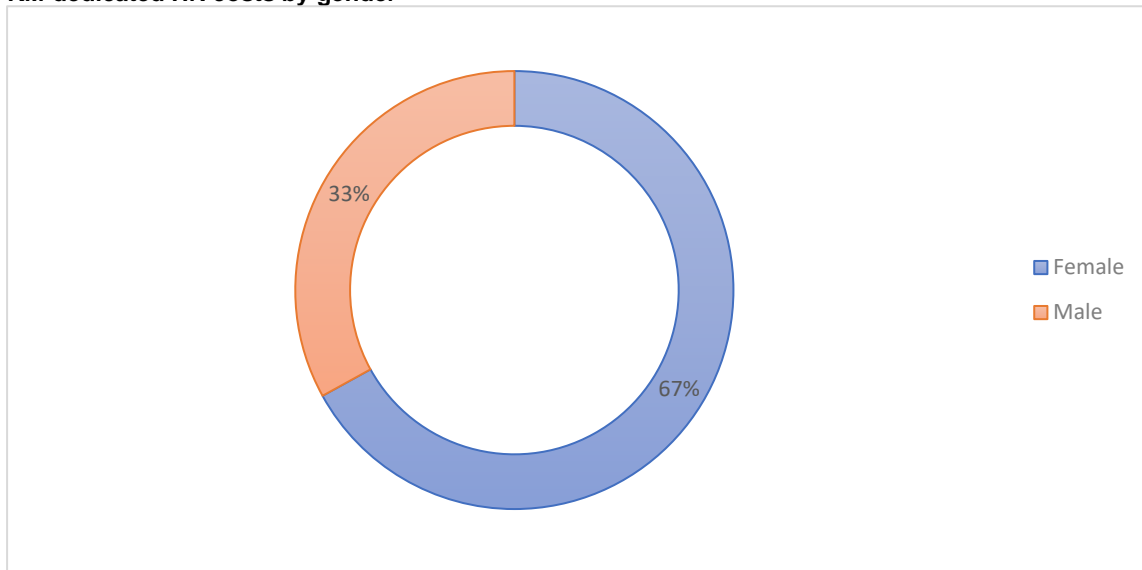
Figure 16

Number of KM-dedicated staff by grade



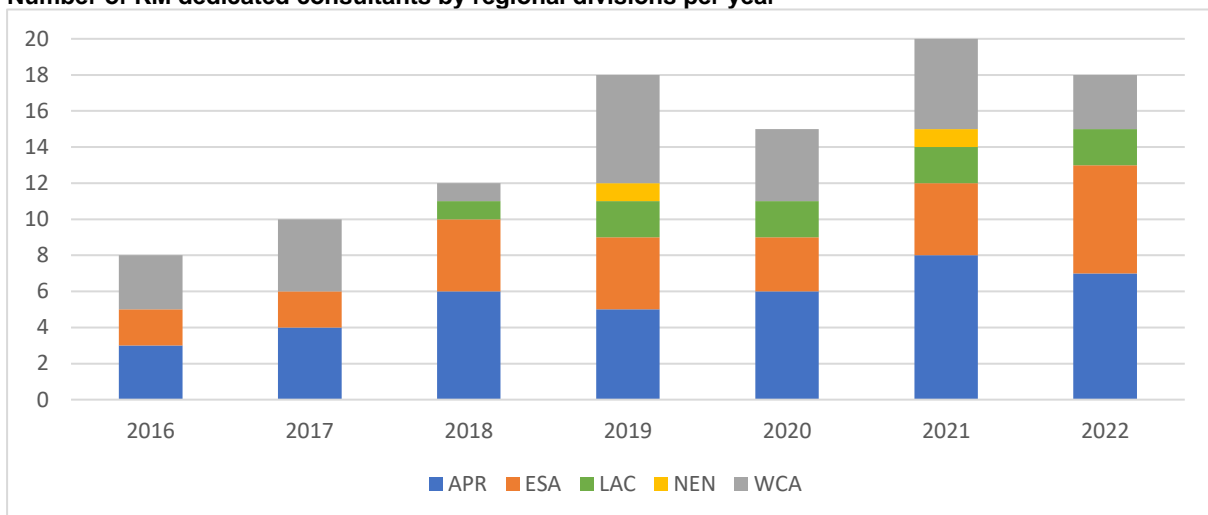
Source: CLE analysis on HR data

Figure 17
KM-dedicated HR costs by gender



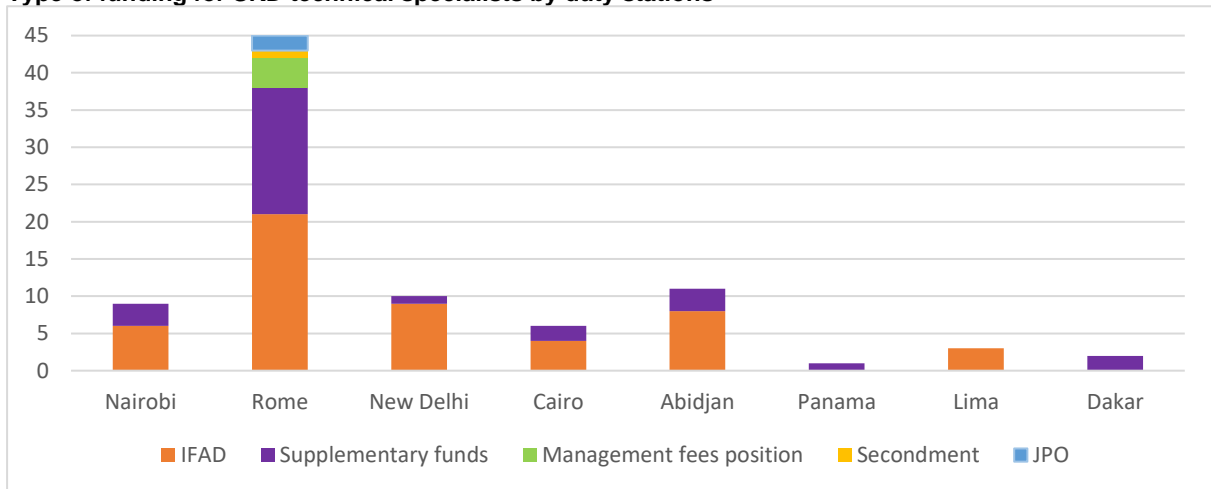
Source: CLE analysis on HR data

Figure 18
Number of KM dedicated consultants by regional divisions per year



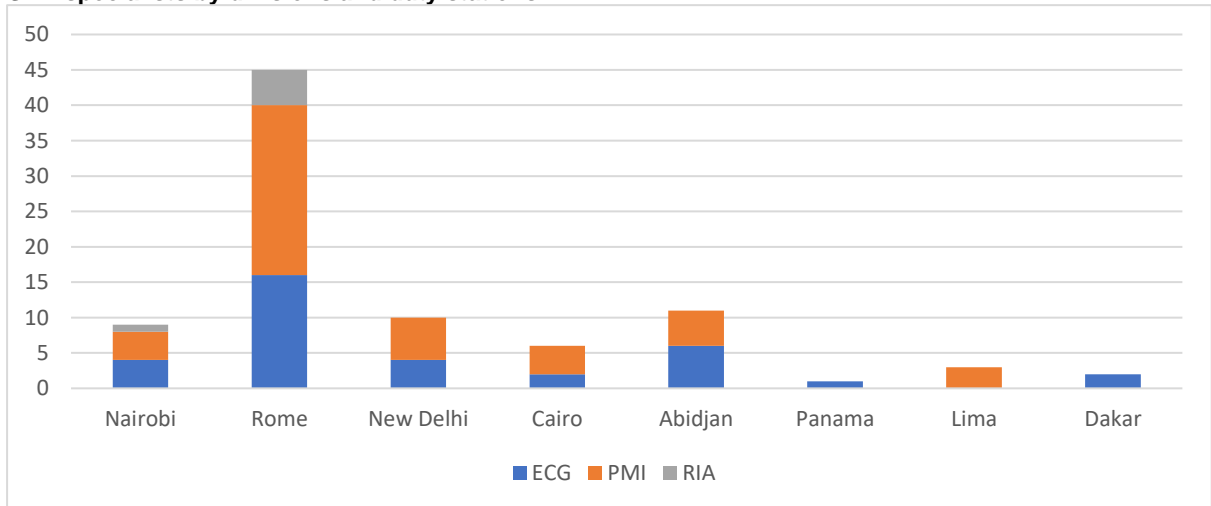
Source: CLE analysis on HR data

Figure 19
Type of funding for SKD technical specialists by duty stations



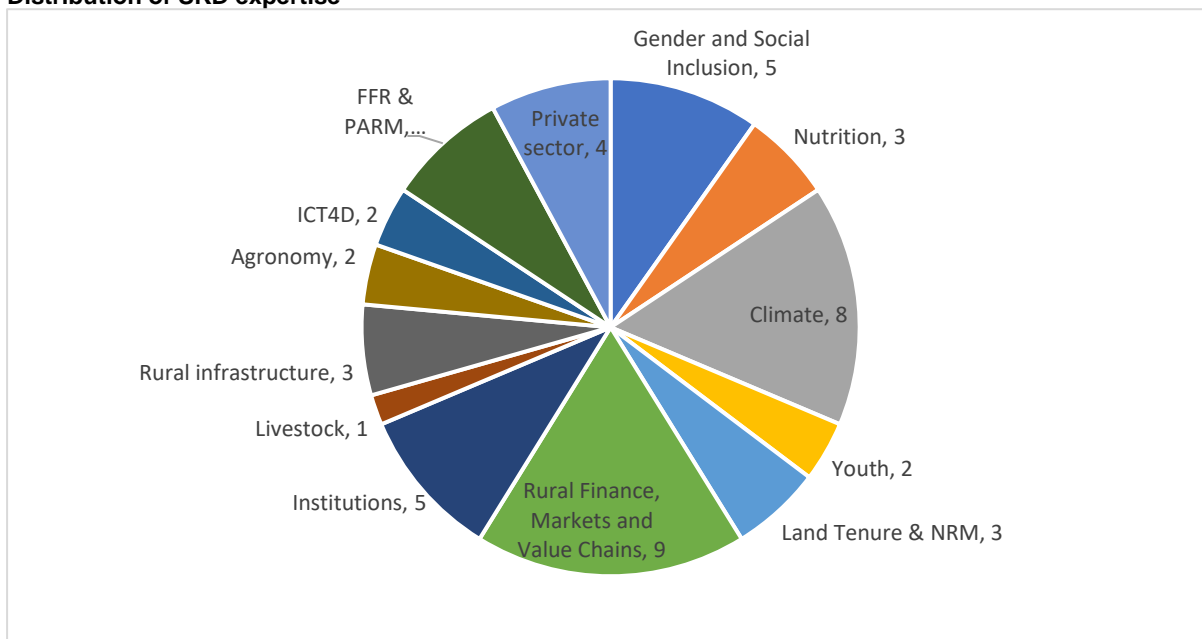
Source: CLE analysis on HR data

Figure 20
SKD specialists by divisions and duty stations



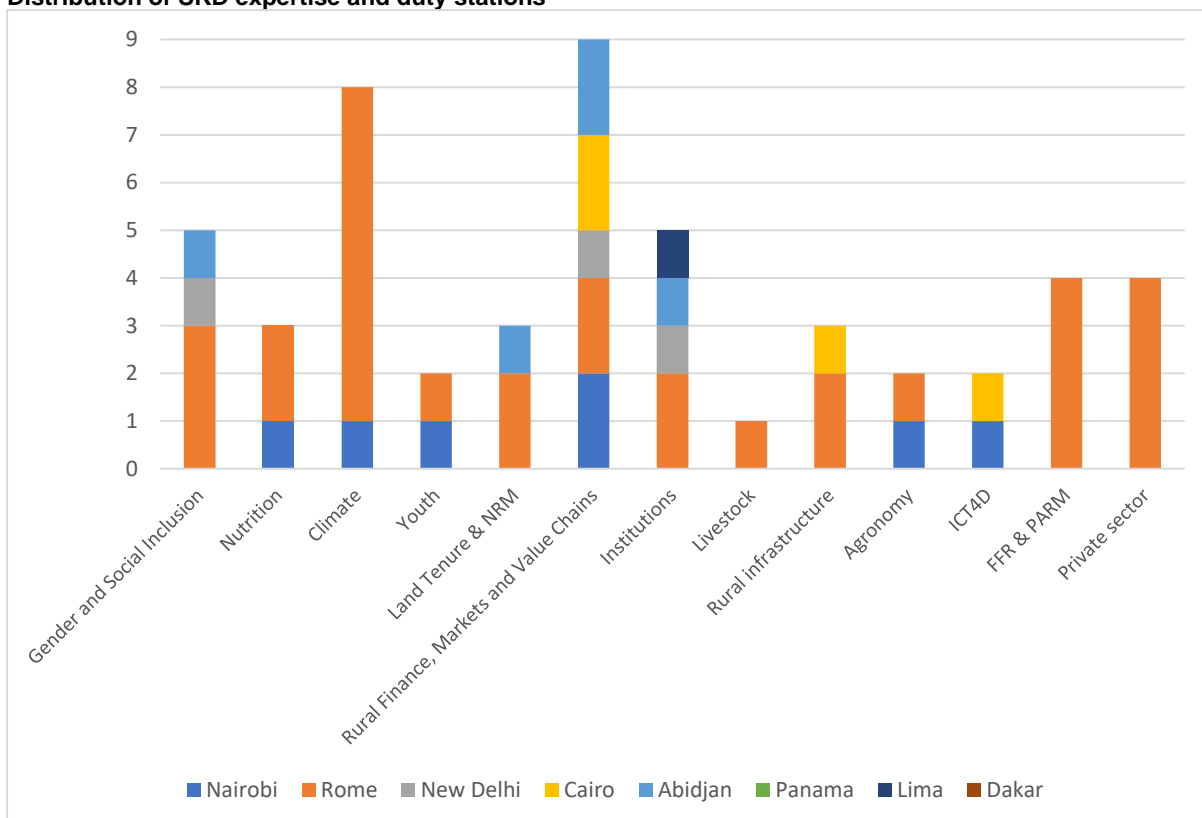
Source: CLE analysis on HR data

Figure 21
Distribution of SKD expertise



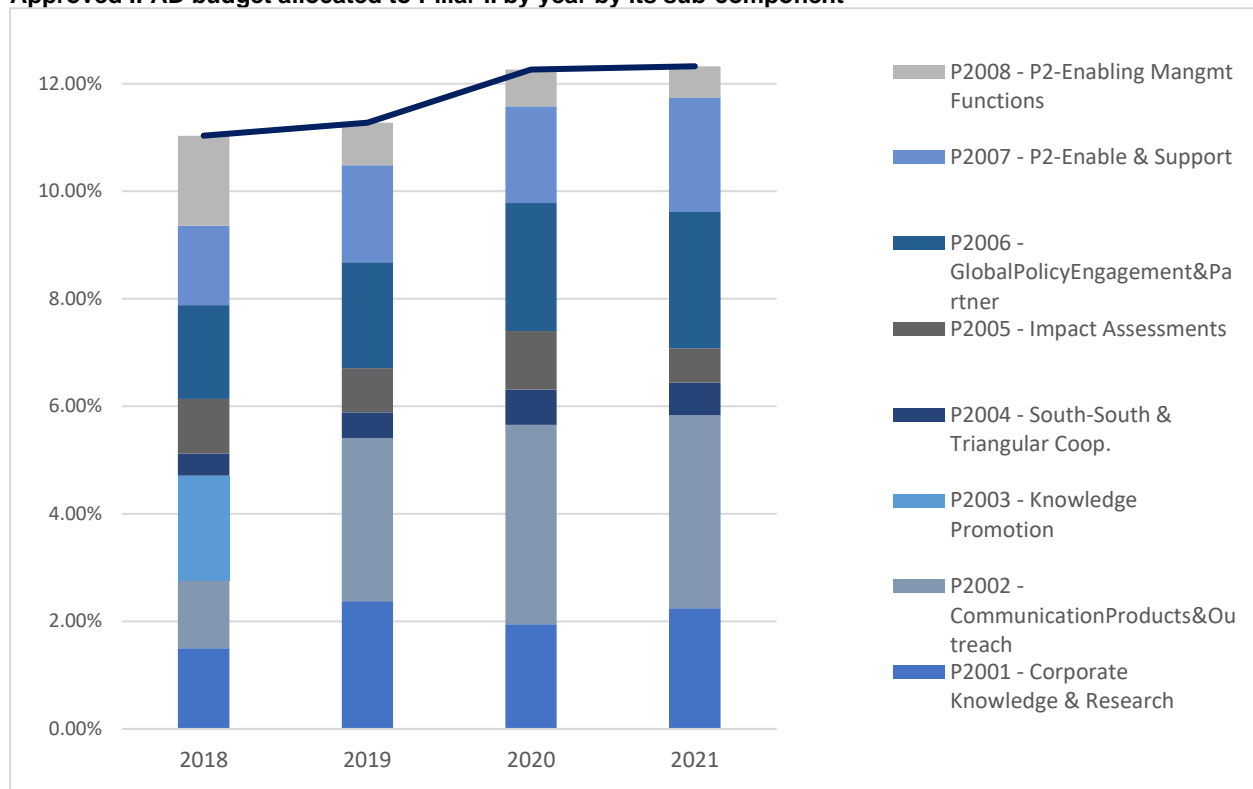
Source: CLE analysis on HR data

Figure 22
Distribution of SKD expertise and duty stations



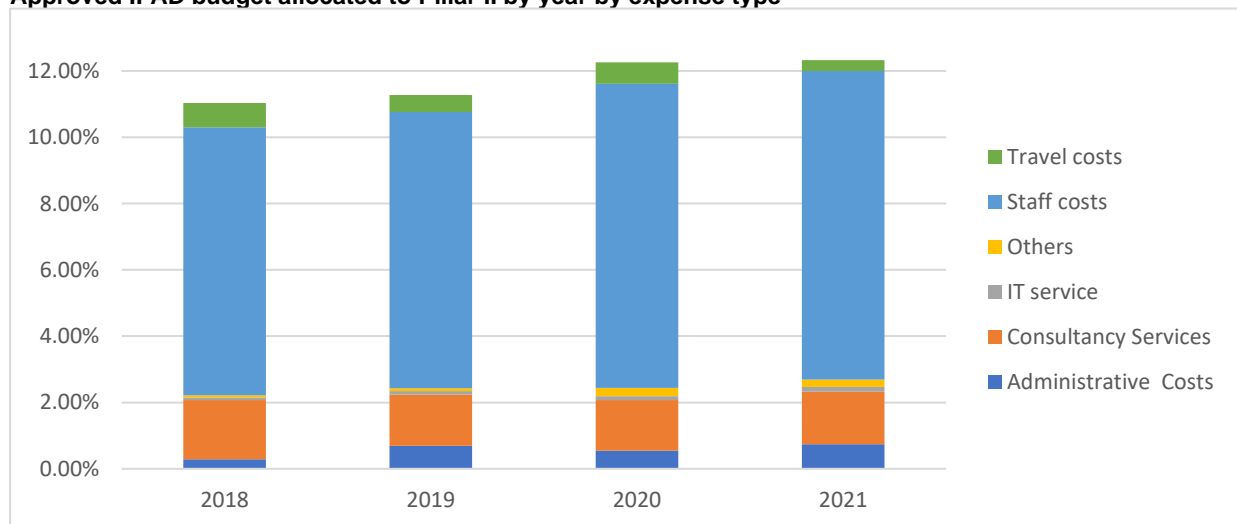
Source: CLE analysis on HR data

Figure 23
Approved IFAD budget allocated to Pillar II by year by its sub-component



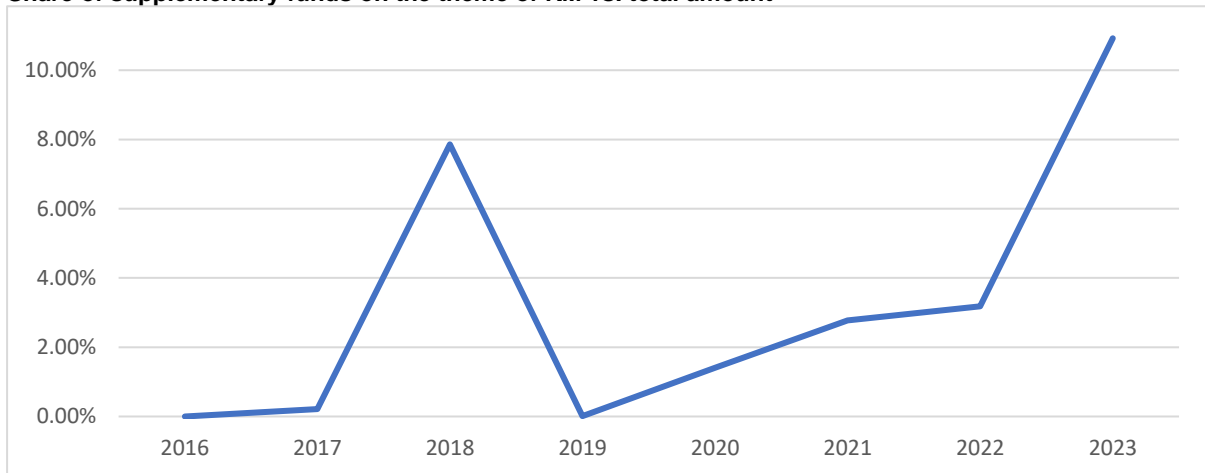
Source: CLE analysis on OSB data

Figure 24
Approved IFAD budget allocated to Pillar II by year by expense type



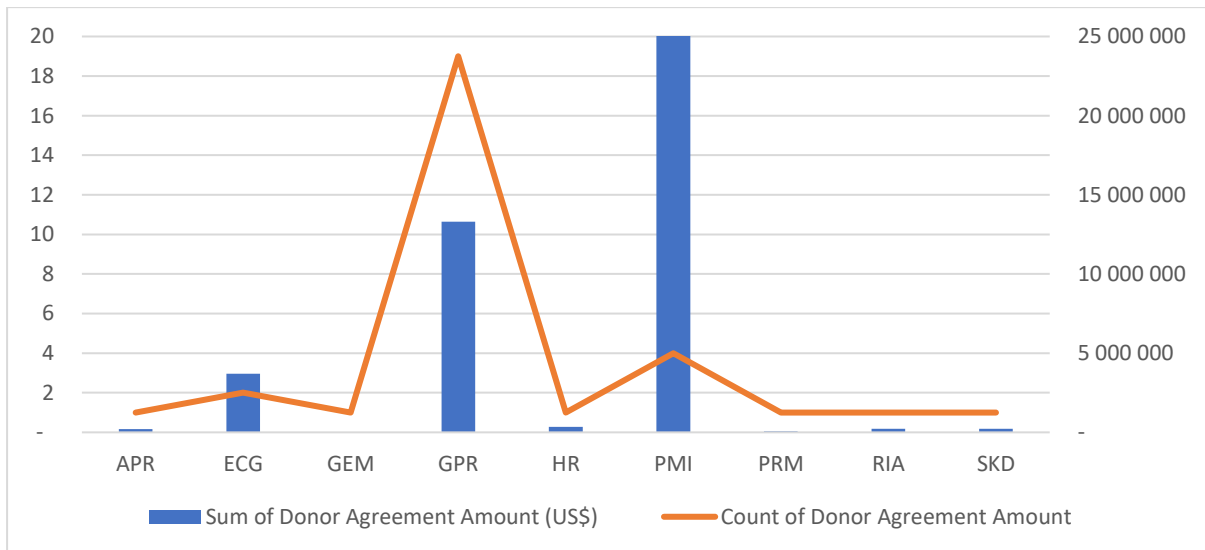
Source: CLE analysis on OSB data

Figure 25
Share of supplementary funds on the theme of KM vs. total amount



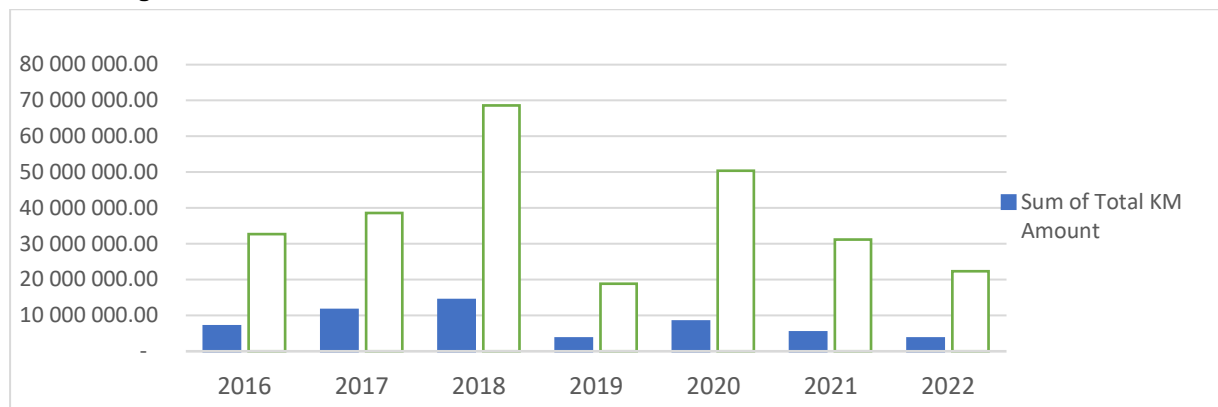
Source: CLE analysis on OBI data

Figure 26
Supplementary funds on the theme of KM by Managing Division



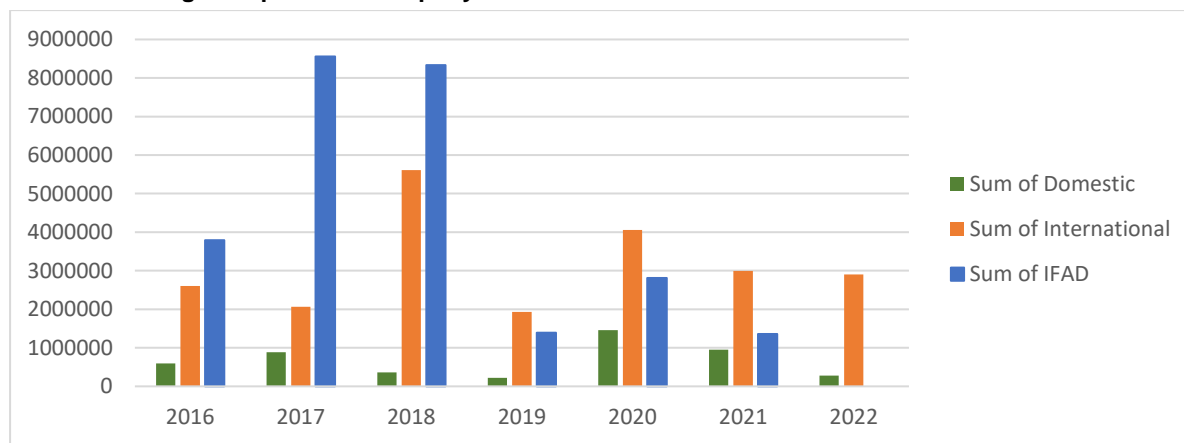
Source: CLE analysis on OBI data

Figure 27
Amount of grants for KM



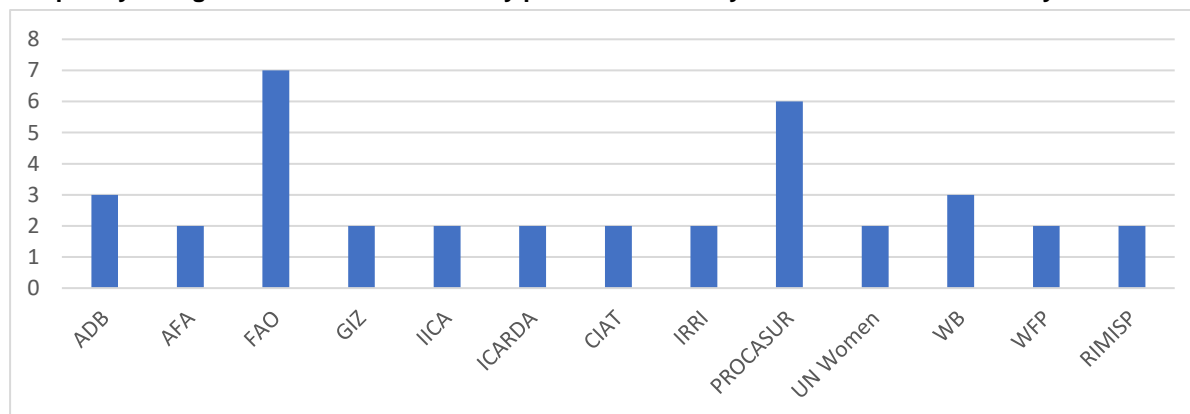
Source: CLE analysis on OBI data

Figure 28
Amount of KM grants per Financier per year



Source: CLE analysis on OBI data

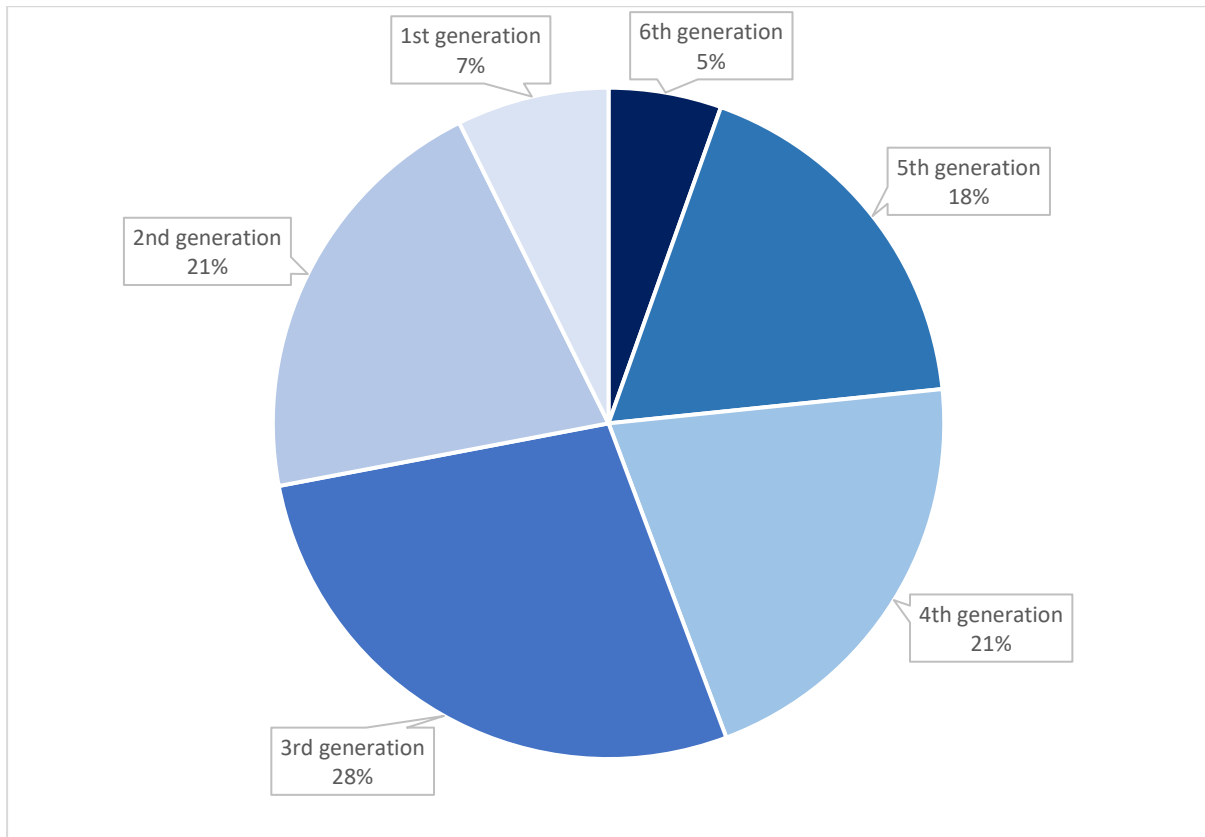
Figure 29
Frequency of organizations identified as key partners in country case studies conducted by the CLE-KM



Source: CLE 20 Country Case Studies

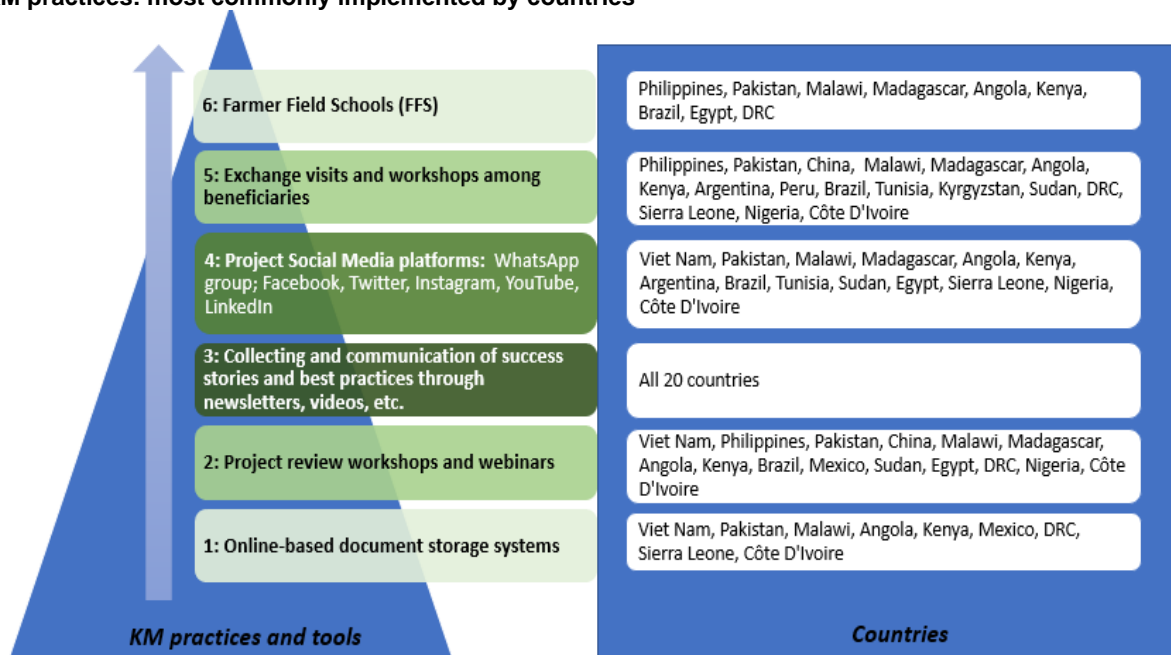
C. CLE case studies: KM practices at the country level

Figure 30
KM practices and tools overview



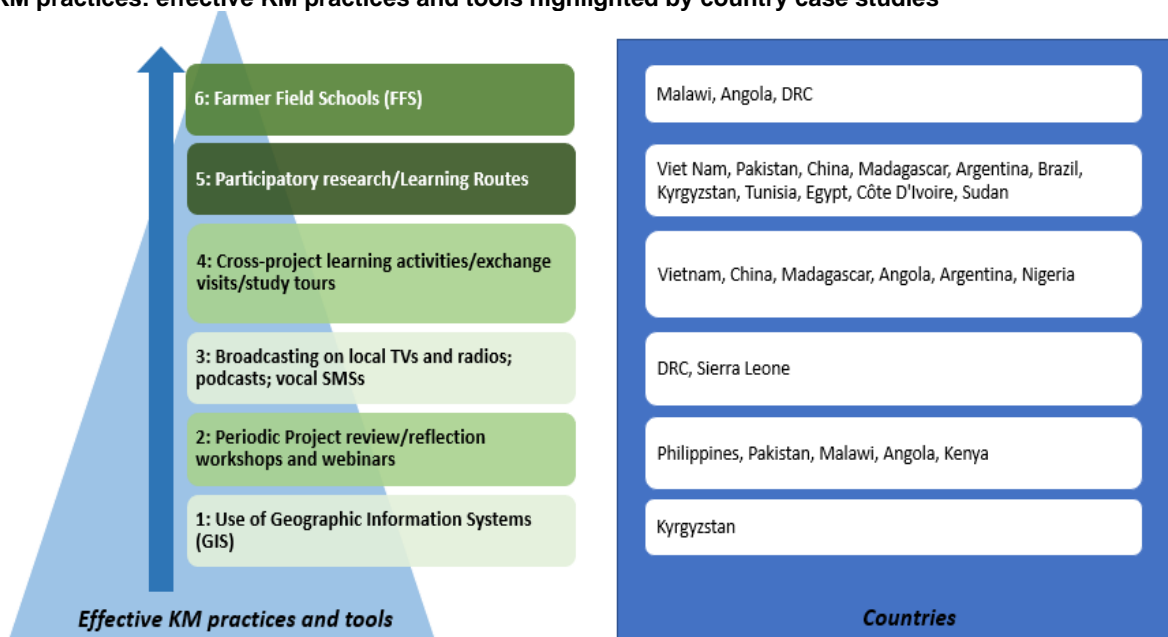
Source: CLE 20 Country Case Studies Synopsis

Figure 31
KM practices: most commonly implemented by countries



Source: CLE 20 Country Case Studies Synopsis

Figure 32
KM practices: effective KM practices and tools highlighted by country case studies



Source: CLE 20 Country Case Studies Synopsis

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Senior Advisor's report

December 2023

Overall, this is a very well designed and executed evaluation. It has been done with a keen awareness of the challenges when defining, institutionalising and inspiring the use of 'knowledge' in a financing organisation. It gave much thought to the rationales for the evaluation framing and approach, brought together multiple lines of evidence based on sound methodologies, and engaged with the needs and interests of the intended users. Evaluations inevitably have limitations; the art of credible, useful evaluation lies in ensuring multiple strengths within given constraints, while minimising weaknesses. The evaluation team deserves praise for doing this well.

Significance of the evaluation

The CLE can help to evolve IFAD's knowledge flows and KM structures and processes to be truly fit for this new era. Quality knowledge has always been essential for development. Successful countries, societies and communities are defined by how well they gain, create and work with knowledge for the benefit of their economic, social and environmental advancement. And today this is more important than ever: The hope of achieving the SDGs within the foreseeable future has faded, and the world is now entering a state of [permacrisis](#) coupled to an extraordinarily rapid evolution in AI and a definitive shift in geopolitical power. The time of piecemeal 'business as usual' approaches to crafting development solutions is clearly past; none of us can shirk the responsibility and challenge of crafting and using knowledge and insights that respond to the challenges and opportunities of this time.

State-of-the-art knowledge and innovation are essential for truly transformative action on the ground. Progress towards transformative rural development now demands insights beyond convention - even beyond IFAD's current focus on 'holistic thinking', on connecting multiple knowledges, engaging in multistakeholder processes and ensuring diversity, equality and inclusion. It requires mastery of the implications of culture and context as well as the use of complexity concepts - often inherent in Indigenous philosophies - suitably translated for use on the ground. Few (peer) organisations have been able to do this with success.

The CLE can support IFAD's positioning as leader in its special niche as - at least in part - a knowledge 'boundary organisation', one with financing power and a focus on transformation. The CLE acknowledges well those aspects of IFAD that makes it a 'boundary organisation'¹³⁵ as far as its knowledge function is concerned. Apart from its financing strategies it interprets knowledge and evidence for practice, and helps a diversity of stakeholders to put research, evaluation and experience-based insights into practice. As the main multilateral actor with the power and responsibility that financing transformative rural development provides, IFAD is very well positioned to play a strong *leadership role* in assisting country stakeholders to design, implement and evaluate strategies and programmes based on what is today known about how *transformative development* happens. It is therefore fitting that the CLE emphasised 'knowledge for practice' and 'knowledge practices', and especially notable that it recommends IFAD to develop a knowledge agenda rooted in practice despite often being hampered by IFAD and country capacity as well as structural weaknesses.

I note, among others, some additional issues below for possible further urgent study.

¹³⁵ See for example [this paper](#) and [this one](#) on relevant boundary organisation insights, and [this one](#) on the role of boundary-spanning networks.

Conceptualisation

The two frameworks used in the evaluation worked well to guide the methodology and evaluative reasoning that led to the findings and conclusions.

(i) The theory of change allowed the testing of the hypotheses or narratives about how change is assumed to happen. (ii) The six generational approaches helped to make sure that the evaluation team designed the CLE aware of how the KM field today supports transformative change. Together, these two frameworks also complement the existing KM 'maturity model' that IFAD developed to monitor and assess the evolution of, and progress in its knowledge work.

There were two limitations in the conceptualisation that can be addressed in follow-up actions:

- *In-depth assessment of the quality¹³⁶ of the knowledge and insight that IFAD assembles, uses and shares.* The CLE focus on organisational systems and practices using the DAC principles and criteria was pragmatic and appropriate. However, influencing policy or practice through knowledge and understandings *unfit or incomplete* for what is needed for this time will at best not contribute to transformation, and at worst do damage. I therefore recommend a rapid evaluative study in the near future that can delve deeper into this important matter.
- *Future-proofing the knowledge agenda will be crucial.* We are entering a highly uncertain and unpredictable period. IFAD may therefore want to add a stronger ongoing emphasis on global and regional trends analysis and future scenarios in its knowledge agenda for the benefit of both its programming and evaluation functions. For example, a simple '[three horizons](#)' perspective can help management think through the dynamic contexts in which KM has to prove its value. The CLE recommendations can also be further detailed with this in mind.

Operationalisation

The methodology detailed in the annexes confirm the efforts made to ensure that the CLE findings and conclusions are robust: useful frameworks, a theory-based mixed methods design, multiple lines of evidence, many sources with good rationales for the selection, and a strong focus on qualitative information as well as defensible triangulation. Not all biases could be avoided, but inadequacies in data sets, such as the low response rate for the KAP survey, were recognised and considered. A RAG (Red-Amber-Green) map detailing the strength of evidence would add to its credibility; this can be considered for future evaluations. Some of the data classifications in the annexes may also be useful to inform future monitoring and learning efforts.

The boundary-setting is well justified, but inevitably raises further questions that may be important to help shape and guide IFAD's KM in the near future.

Knowledge-focused evaluations can seldom address all desirable issues, and their scope tend to be hard to pin down; KM is a contested concept and tends to infuse all organisational systems, while knowledge flows in unpredictable ways among (potential) users. It is therefore no surprise that the intended users of the CLE have outstanding questions. It will be helpful to record key omissions, consider their implications, and if necessary, address them through self-reflections or rapid reviews as complement to independent evaluations and MTRs.

The evaluative reasoning is generally sound, cumulating in a few substantive

¹³⁶ Including aspects such as its relevance, timeliness, technical credibility, values-informed legitimacy, positioning for (immediate) use. If valued, in-depth assessment of their (potential or actual) impact can also be done.

key recommendations that can also spark further conversation. Evaluation helps to clarify and prioritise strategy and action based on the best available evidence and evaluative reasoning, connecting findings, conclusions and recommendations. It seldom claims to be the last word on what should be done. The nuanced analyses and detailed secondary recommendations in the CLE can spark further conversation and decisions that can combine the independent expertise of the evaluation team with internal experience.

KM benchmarking is seldom informative; instead, KM management and staff need to be in the thick of things to gain insight into what is current and worth translating for IFAD's context. Unsurprisingly, comprehensive benchmarking has been a notable challenge in the CLE. Few relevant peer evaluation reports were available – and inevitably, unless intentionally designed for comparison, such reports yield limited useful information. Instead, it is beneficial to have a consistent finger on the pulse of the KM state-of-the-art in theory and in practice, *including* in generative AI and among INGOs, foundations and other 'non-peer' organisations that work on the ground. IFAD can also at the same time advance the KM field and profile its contributions as transformative development financier together with its country partners. High profile writings, events, collaborations, and attention to the effectiveness of IFAD linked CoPs will help to confirm in IFAD that KM is a specialist field worthy of specialist expertise.

Use

The value of the CLE can now be further enhanced, led by management, also for the public good. I appreciate the CLE team's consultations at various stages even as they strive to maintain a good degree of independence. I also appreciate the reports of constructive, thoughtful engagement by management. Beyond IFAD, wider conversations initiated by management around key issues emerging from the CLE can now strengthen KM practice for transformation, and position IFAD's knowledge role more intentionally among the Rome-based agencies and other key players in the same ecosystems.

Findings, conclusions and recommendations

The questionable assumptions underlying the IFAD's KM theory of change are a major cause of concern – including the potential 'killer' assumptions around adequate resources and appropriate IFAD and country capacities. The CLE therefore correctly points to the need for urgent action on multiple fronts with regard to IFAD's positioning, organisational systems, coherence and culture.

Artificial Intelligence is set to change everything, including all aspects of KM. The CLE has not addressed this aspect in detail; indeed, much is still unknown, including how AI will impact the Global South. But it is clear that KM as field will be increasingly pressed to grow in sophistication resulting from advances in AI. IFAD will benefit from tracking how this will affect the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of its knowledge work.

Its long track record in this field can now help IFAD to commit more robustly to KM fit for this era. It is important that such experience and commitment are reflected in five priority actions indicated in the CLE: (i) Appropriate positioning of the KM custodian office. KM is often paired with innovation, evidence and/or impact related functions. (ii) Resources and capacities commensurate with IFAD's important knowledge role as well as its ability to stay abreast of AI developments. (iii) Organisational culture and systems that work for impactful KM. (iv) Recognition of KM as specialist field through allocation of clearly defined high profile roles – that is, KM specialists with

authority, capabilities and explicit responsibilities¹³⁷ to steward the KM strategy and agenda. These are in addition to the 'extended team' – that is, all staff enabling knowledge flows within and beyond IFAD. (v) Fully engaging with the meaning of an effective 'learning culture' in IFAD and among potential knowledge users, and inspiring action accordingly.

The value of South-South cooperation, and the key contributions South-rooted knowledge can make, require further concerted attention across IFAD. Across the Global South we need to continue developing new or adjusted narratives about how transformative change can work. In doing so, it takes special skill and commitment to ensure that knowledge from the Global South takes its rightful place – blending knowledge from different knowledge systems in ways that give equal or even more profile and respect to SSC (and appropriate SSTC) experiences and insights. This includes decolonising the frameworks, concepts and approaches used in KM, and making SSC and SSTC generated knowledge a more integral part of the culture of working with knowledge and learning in IFAD.

I trust that these few observations will add to the value of the CLE for IFAD's corporate strategy and KM deliberations and plans as 2024 unfolds.



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¹³⁷ [A few examples](#) (see also [here](#)): KM Sponsor, KM Lead, KM Champion, Knowledge Manager, Knowledge Architect, Knowledge Analyst, Knowledge Editor, Technology Lead, Content Manager, etc.