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President's report on a proposed grant under the global/regional grants window to the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) to Strengthen Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe

Note to Executive Board representatives

Focal points:

Technical questions:

Nerina Muzurovic
Knowledge Management Officer
Near East, North Africa and Europe Division
Tel.: +39 06 5459 2699
e-mail: n.muzurovic@ifad.org

Dispatch of documentation:

William Skinner
Chief
Governing Bodies
Tel.: +39 06 5459 2974
e-mail: gb@ifad.org

For: Approval

Recommendation for approval

The Executive Board is invited to approve the recommendation for the proposed grant as contained in paragraph 18.

President's report on a proposed grant under the global/regional grants window to ICARDA to Strengthen Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe

I. Background and compliance with IFAD Policy for Grant Financing

1. Knowledge management and South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) play an integral part in effectively developing and sharing solutions for agricultural and rural development. Despite this fact, in the regions of the Near East and North Africa (NENA) and Central Asia and Europe (CEN), organizational capacities vary broadly in the public agricultural and rural institutions of relevance for this area. Opportunities for knowledge systematization and transfer between countries remain largely untapped. This grant seeks to address this problem by systematically identifying and seeking to fill the most relevant knowledge gaps, and by strengthening organizational learning in the above-mentioned areas across three focus countries (with potentially two additional countries to be added).
2. In accordance with the IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025, IFAD Knowledge Management Framework 2014-2018 and IFAD Development Effectiveness Framework, knowledge management is commonly understood as the necessary condition for targeted collection of data, effective measurement of results and systematic dissemination of lessons learned. In this context – and as stated in IFAD's Approach to South-South and Triangular Cooperation paper – SSTC can serve as an important vehicle for sharing relevant development solutions and knowledge, as well as for building partnerships and support.
3. The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), the recipient of the grant, was selected as the result of a competitive process. The quality of the proposal submitted by ICARDA was rated with the highest possible score. Its prominent regional presence and specialized units for monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and capacity development were assessed as specific strengths of ICARDA's programme. ICARDA, a CGIAR institution, has solid experience on the ground and extensive knowledge of national agricultural research systems and institutions, and has long been recognized as a reliable partner in policy dialogue. This combination will help ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the proposed activities.
4. At the same time, ICARDA endorsed the Grant Quality Enhancement Review Team's recommendation to bring in the Corporation for Regional Rural Development Training (PROCASUR) as an implementing partner for the components related to capacity assessment and "learning routes". PROCASUR is specialized in identifying and scaling up home-grown innovations, and has had well documented success in carrying out knowledge-sharing activities via several IFAD-funded programmes throughout the world. It contributed to defining an inclusive and participatory approach that underpinned the entire knowledge assessment, development and dissemination process.

5. This grant is in line with the objectives of IFAD grant financing indicated in the IFAD Policy for Grant Financing, as it aims to strengthen partners' institutional capacities and generate and share knowledge for greater development impact. More specifically, the programme builds upon IFAD's commitment to expand its support to capacity development for learning as well as for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, in line with thematic cluster III of the IFAD Medium-term Plan 2016–2018: better results management through improved M&E systems. In addition, the proposed activities are focused on the fourth priority area defined by Strategic Guidance for IFAD Grants 2017 (improved data collection and better results management) and fully adhere to the key strategic directions for global/regional grants, as they demonstrate a robust dimension related to public goods in generating and sharing knowledge across countries in the NENA and CEN regions.
6. The grant contributes to achieving the corporate objective – endorsed by the Executive Board in December 2016 – of strengthening IFAD's operational approach through a dedicated IFAD strategy for engagement in countries with fragile situations. It also contributes to developing diverse knowledge products within and between middle-income countries (MICs), thus adopting all three approaches for successful delivery of the IFAD Medium-Term Plan 2016-2018, namely: SSTC, capacity-building and policy engagement.

II. The proposed programme

7. The programme's overall goal is to develop effective and long-term knowledge management capacities to support rural agricultural development in three target countries (with an additional two countries that may be added later). The objectives are to: (i) assess capacity and enhance the knowledge management skills of key rural institutions and other stakeholders in the Republic of Moldova, Morocco and Sudan (and two other countries that may be added); and (ii) foster and promote knowledge exchange in-country, between countries and with regional partners to foster knowledge uptake, transfer and management.
8. This programme will be focused around three thematic areas of work to drive the type of knowledge that will be managed: (i) financial inclusion of rural women and youth; (ii) natural resource management and climate resilience; and (iii) productive agricultural technologies (e.g. water management technologies, conservation agriculture and drought-resilient crops).
9. The direct target group will comprise 160 people working in national public institutions across the target countries that can most benefit from work focused on rural poverty in MICs and those experiencing situations of fragility. It is expected that an additional 500 public employees will be able to promote the programme's results. The programme will also enable 5,000 beneficiaries to access and use existing or newly created knowledge. In addition, 12,000 beneficiaries will be targeted via dissemination campaigns, bringing the number of beneficiaries to 17,660.
10. The programme will be implemented over four years and will have the following components:
 - (i) Knowledge management capacity assessment for enhanced formulation of learning needs;
 - (ii) Capacity development and knowledge systematization; and
 - (iii) Enhanced regional knowledge exchange.

III. Expected outcomes/outputs

11. The programme is expected to have the following outcomes/outputs:
- (i) Improved understanding of the knowledge management capacities of the key rural institutions in three target countries in the NEN region (with an additional two countries that may be added), through:
 - An assessment of knowledge management capacity gaps and learning needs carried out in the NEN target countries, focusing on public institutions (e.g. government agencies, research institutions, universities) that are key players in rural development and agriculture solutions;
 - Formulation of an approach paper, to include a knowledge management and communication strategy, for each of the NEN target countries;
 - Formulation of capacity development and innovation plans for the NEN target countries;
 - A regional planning workshop to kick-start roll-out of the plans and establish a community of practice.
 - (ii) Effective learning systems established and embedded across organizational processes, with strengthened human and institutional capacities to manage the systematization of good practices in three target countries (with an additional two countries that may be added):
 - Delivery of on-demand training courses on knowledge management in the NEN target countries;
 - Organization of at least three learning routes in the NEN target countries, across the three thematic areas.
 - (iii) Improved knowledge exchanges among stakeholders, based on increased adoption of good practices and knowledge transfer for increased SSTC, replication and scaling up in three target countries (with an additional two countries that may be added):
 - Set-up and regular maintenance of an online portal;
 - Roll-out of knowledge symposiums presenting best practices among key partners in the NEN target countries, under the three thematic areas;
 - Development and dissemination of knowledge products covering “what works” in each of the focus countries, including a compendium of all case studies gathered under the three thematic areas.

IV. Implementation arrangements

12. ICARDA will ensure implementation of programme activities, with PROCASUR, the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies – Bari, as implementing partners. The following potential in-country public institutions and think tanks will also participate:
- (i) Morocco: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests; French National Institute for Agricultural Research; Caisse Nationale de Crédit Agricole (National Agricultural Credit Bank); Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II (Hassan II Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine); and Fondation pour le Développement Local et le Partenariat (Foundation for Local Development and Partnership);

- (ii) Republic of Moldova: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry; National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova; State Agrarian University of Moldova; and Institutul pentru Dezvoltare și Inițiative Sociale “Viitorul” (Institute for Development and Social Initiatives – IDIS Viitorul);
- (iii) Sudan: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; Department of Technology Transfer, Agricultural Research Corporation; National Information Center, Ministry of Science and Communications; College of Agricultural Studies, Sudan University of Science and Technology; University of Khartoum; Ahfad University for Women; University of Gezira; Sudanese Knowledge Society; and Sudan Federal Food Security Technical Secretariat.
13. It is anticipated that additional in-country partners will be secured prior to programme inception.
14. ICARDA will be responsible for overall coordination and technical and financial management of the programme, through its Beirut headquarters, as well as at a regional level through its offices in Morocco (Rabat), Egypt (Cairo) and Uzbekistan (Tashkent). Timely and effective implementation will be managed by the programme implementation unit, with input from regional coordinators and scientific programme leaders.
15. The knowledge management for this work will draw directly from the principles and actions outlined in the IFAD Strategy for Knowledge Management. It will be ensured that specific mechanisms are implemented to promote IFAD learning and that there is effective dissemination and support of knowledge within programme countries, through their participating institutions.
16. There are no deviations from the standard procedures for financial reporting and audits.

V. Indicative programme costs and financing

17. The total cost of the programme is estimated at US\$2,115,000. IFAD will contribute US\$1,800,000 (85 per cent), while cost sharing from in-kind contributions will come to US\$315,000 (15 per cent). Disbursements from IFAD will be made to ICARDA through the World Bank, acting as trustee for this grant.

Table 1
Costs by component and financier
 (Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Components</i>	<i>IFAD</i>	<i>ICARDA (in-kind)</i>	<i>Other cofinanciers (in-kind)</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Knowledge management capacity assessment for enhanced formulation of learning needs	433	15	60	508
2. Capacity development and knowledge systematization	598	30	105	733
3. Enhanced regional knowledge exchange	602	30	75	707
Cross-cutting	167	-	-	167
Total	1 800	75	240	2 115

Table 2
Costs by expenditure category and financier
 (Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Expenditure category</i>	<i>IFAD</i>	<i>ICARDA (in-kind)</i>	<i>Other cofinanciers (in-kind)</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Salaries and allowances	417	40	-	457
2. Consultancies	145	-	45	190
3. Travel and allowances	13	-	-	13
4. Workshops	308	-	-	308
5. Operating costs	203	30	-	233
6. Goods, services and inputs	547	5	195	747
7. Overheads	131	-	-	131
8. Cost sharing	36			36
Total	1 800	75	240	2 115

VI. Recommendation

18. I recommend that the Executive Board approve the proposed grant in terms of the following resolution:

RESOLVED: that the Fund, in order to finance, in part, the programme to Strengthen Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe, shall provide a grant of one million eight hundred thousand United States dollars (US\$1.8 million) to International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas for a four-year period, upon such terms and conditions as shall be substantially in accordance with the terms and conditions presented to the Executive Board herein.

Gilbert F. Hougbo
 President

Results-based logical framework

Level	Objectives-hierarchy	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
Goal	Develop effective and long-term knowledge management-related capacities in target countries #3 (+2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased budgetary commitment for KM-related activities (target \geq 60% of participating rural institutions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final independent evaluation report National institutions budget plan for the 3-5-10 year plan after the closure of the programme and if not available survey of key stakeholders on their commitments to KM activities. 	Institutional commitment to KM-related investments
Objectives	<p>1. Assess capacity and enhance knowledge management skills of key rural institutions and other stakeholders in Moldova, Morocco, Sudan and two other countries</p> <p>2. Foster and promote knowledge exchange across in-country, cross-country and trans-regional partners to foster knowledge management and transfer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced knowledge management skills of target institutions (target \geq 80% of participating rural institutions) Increased knowledge sharing capacity of target institutions among each other and across countries (target \geq 80% of participating rural institutions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme mid-term external evaluation Completion survey 	<p>National governments, particularly the ministries of agriculture and other relevant institutions, are willing to improve their KM systems, instruments and processes.</p> <p>Commitments to upscale and replicate by development partners.</p>
Outcomes	<p>1. Improved understanding of KM capacities of the key rural institutions in 3 (+2) target countries in NEN region</p> <p>2. Effective learning systems established and embedded across organizational processes with strengthened human and institutional capacities to manage the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of participants adopting improved KM approaches and practices in their particular function (target \geq 60%) Frequency of use of knowledge products (target = 600 downloads per year and 3,000 visits per year) Number of innovation platforms, learning alliances, CoPs or other multi-stakeholder platforms established (target = 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme KM assessments (method: systems analysis disaggregated by theme, gender and country) Programme evaluations Online tracking tools Survey on adaptation patterns/behavioral changes among target groups 	<p>High commitment and sense of ownership from relevant rural institutions, as well as individual officers, particularly, those in strategic positions, to engage in the process.</p> <p>International development partners</p>

Level	Objectives-hierarchy	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
	<p>systematization of good practices</p> <p>3. Improved knowledge exchanges among stakeholders based on increased adoption of good practices and knowledge transfer for increased SSTC, replication and scaling up.</p>			<p>are supportive and acknowledge the progress and updates.</p>
Outputs	<p>Components:</p> <p>1. KM capacity assessment for enhanced formulation of learning needs</p> <p>2. Capacity development and knowledge systematization</p> <p>3. Enhanced regional knowledge exchange</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of KM capacity & learning needs assessments (gap analysis) conducted (Target: at least 5 pre-selected institutions per country) • Approach Paper developed • Number of KM training courses organized (target = 8; at least 160 participants; >=80% satisfaction/effectiveness rate) • Number of learning routes organized (target= • 3 at least 75 participants, >=80% satisfaction/ effectiveness rate) • Number of symposia rolled-out at country level (target = 3, >= 80% satisfaction/effectiveness rate) • Number of knowledge products generated (target = minimum of 30 produced and disseminated to 5,000 people) • Online interoperable repository and portal established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme KM assessments • Peer-reviewed papers submitted and accepted for publication • Attendance records and online surveys and key informant interviews to assess the level of satisfaction and effectiveness of training, learning routes, symposia and knowledge products 	<p>Commitment and participation of target group and effective collaboration with strategic partners.</p>