

## APPENDIX 9: BRIEF REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

### 1. BACKGROUND

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This annex (*or appendix – tbd*) presents a brief review and comparative analysis of Research and Knowledge Management (RSKM) strategies and approaches across the United Nations (UN) system and International Financial Institutions (IFI). Data collection relied on publicly available secondary sources. The research provides also a selected compilation of metrics and approaches for measuring the outcomes of research and knowledge, and KM performance with regards to knowledge generation, knowledge sharing, networking and exchange, as well as quality, reach and uptake of knowledge products and services.

While research and knowledge sharing, and management have been activities frequently referred in the founding texts and mandates of many UN organizations, Knowledge Management started to be embraced as a discipline in the late 90's. In 1996, the World Bank pitched the vision of becoming a "knowledge bank"<sup>1</sup> and engaged in an internal transformation that gained high external profile with the release in 1998 of the "World Development Report 1998/1999 : Knowledge for Development", a report that "acknowledge[d] that knowledge, not capital, is the key to sustained economic growth and improvements in human well-being"<sup>2</sup>. In 1998, UNDP launched its first Knowledge Management initiatives (i.e. Communities of Practice)<sup>3</sup>. In 2000, ILO acknowledged the key role of knowledge management and announced its intention to develop and implement a knowledge management policy<sup>4</sup>. In the early 2000s, many KM initiatives mushroomed across the UN and IFIs, delivering several successes and some lessons learned<sup>5</sup>. Accordingly, the JIU reported in 2007 that "KM in the United Nations system is in its initial stages"<sup>6</sup>. Since then, many more KM initiatives have flourished<sup>7</sup>, being in the form of corporate Research and Knowledge Management strategies and approaches, or regional and country activities, or thematic KM initiatives.

### 2. CASE STUDIES

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The following review concentrates on a few cases that were selected on the basis of the following criteria: RSKM initiatives implemented during the period of the evaluation, with emphasis on recent initiatives; blend of corporate, regional, and thematic initiatives; relevance for the evaluation, in particular results-oriented RSKM initiatives; availability of secondary resources.

#### 2.1. Research and Knowledge Management Strategies and Approaches

##### A. IFAD

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<sup>1</sup> King. K. and McGrath. S. 2003. Knowledge Sharing in Development Agencies: Lessons from Four Cases. Operations Evaluation Department. World Bank. Washington, D.C.

<sup>2</sup> <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/5981>

<sup>3</sup> Glovinsky S. 2012. The story of knowledge networks at the UNDP. Knowledge Management for Development Journal. 8.2-3. Routledge.

<sup>4</sup> ILO. 2000. Strategic policy framework, 2002-05 and preview of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2002-03. GB.279/PFA/6. Geneva.

<sup>5</sup> Glovinsky. S. 2017. How Knowledge Management Could Transform the UN Development System. Briefing 45. Future United Nations Development System. CUNY Graduate Centre. New York.

<sup>6</sup> Larrabure. J. L. 2007. Knowledge Management in the United Nations System. United Nations. JIU. Geneva.

<sup>7</sup> Dumitriu. P. 2016. Knowledge Management in the United Nations System. United Nations. JIU. Geneva.

According to the JIU<sup>8</sup>, in 2007 IFAD adopted one of the most comprehensive and sustainable approaches to knowledge management in its knowledge management strategy. It defined basic concepts and clarified terminology, based on a needs assessment and an inventory of knowledge assets. It provided links to the organization’s overall objectives and programmes, defined roles and responsibilities, and indicated areas of articulation between knowledge management and other key institutional processes.

In 2019, IFAD published a new KM strategy<sup>9</sup>. The **goal** of the strategy is for knowledge to be assembled and transformed, including through partnerships, into better development results for poor rural people, and greater impact towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), especially SDG 1 (no poverty) and SDG 2 (zero hunger). The **objective** is to improve IFAD's ability to generate, use and share the best available evidence and experiential knowledge to achieve higher quality operations, and greater visibility and influence in the global development community. The **theory of change** for IFAD's KM has five main expected outcomes: (i) Higher quality project and country programme results; (ii) Scaled up development results; (iii) Enhanced use of evidence-based and experiential knowledge; (iv) Greater visibility, credibility, and influence, and; (v) A stronger learning culture.

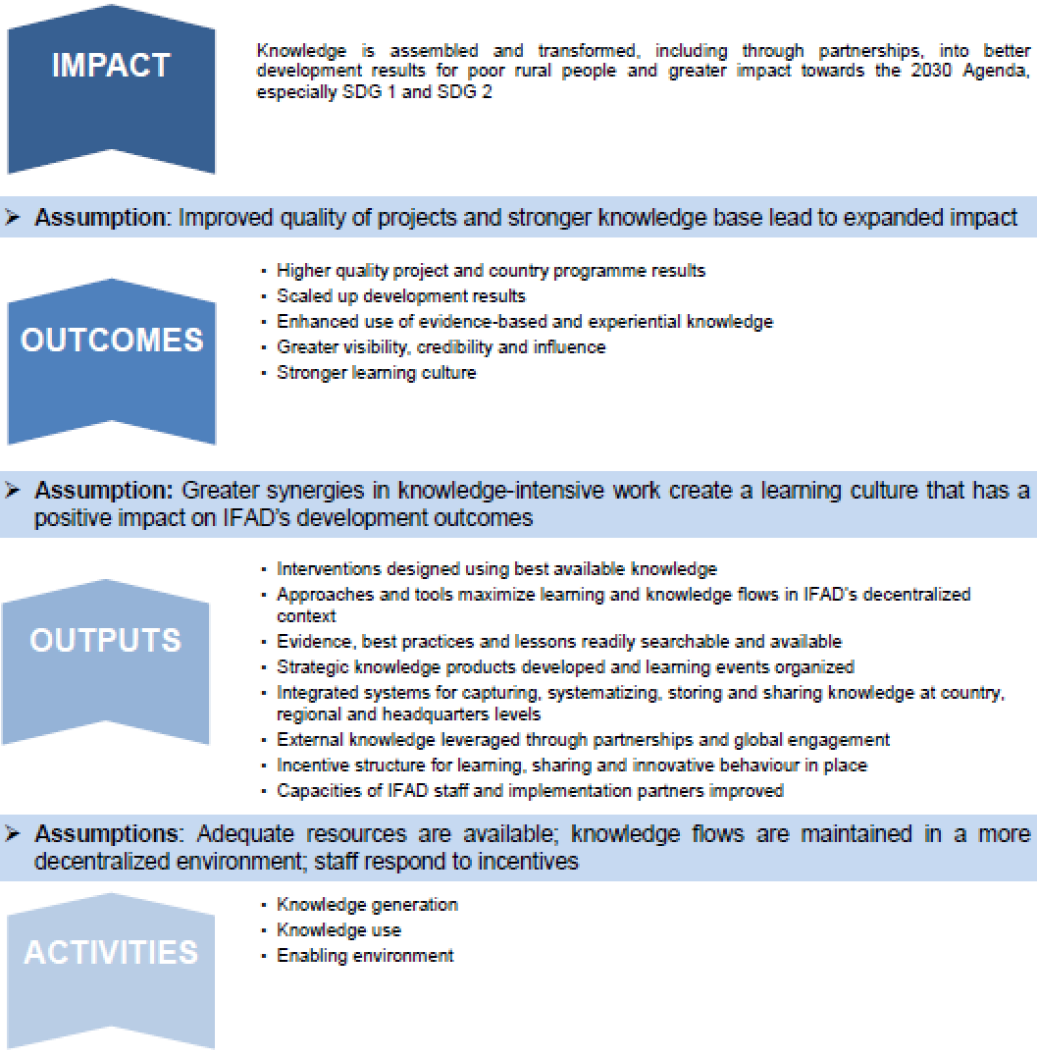


Figure 1: KM Theory of Change at IFAD

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>9</sup> IFAD. 2019. Knowledge Management Strategy. Rome.

The KM Strategy recognizes that KM is a distributed activity requiring close collaboration and coordination among divisions and departments. As such, 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. The KM Strategy established for the first time a **Corporate KM team** to develop guidelines for KM; build capacity in KM skills and competencies; provide advice and support to networks and communities (including the KM community of practice); and provide best practice KM approaches and tools. The lead of the KM strategy is attributed to the Associate Vice-President, Strategy and Knowledge Department. An existing interdivisional **KM Coordination Group (KMCG)** is expected to continue to play an important role in ensuring collaboration across IFAD on KM. The entire **Executive Management Committee** will act as IFAD's KM champions.

A comprehensive monitoring and learning system, mirroring the theory of change, is to be put in place. This will include a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches to measure success. A results measurement framework (Figure 2 is an excerpt) includes output and outcome indicators and targets monitored by *readership and client surveys*.

| Definitions and data sources for the IFAD11 KM RMF indicators |  |                             |  |
|---|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Code  | Outcome indicator  | Source                      | Definition   |
| <b>Level I – Outcomes</b>                                     |  |                             |  |
| <b>1.1</b>  | <b>Visibility, credibility and influence</b>   |                             |  |
| 1.1.1   | Timely, relevant and useful knowledge products (ratings 3 and above) (percentage)                | Client survey               | Simple average of percentage of respondents giving a rating of 3 or above to relevance (Q10.1), percentage of respondents giving a rating of 3 or above to timeliness (Q10.2), and percentage of respondents giving a rating of 3 or above to usefulness (Q10.3) of IFAD's knowledge products.   |
| 1.1.2   | High quality knowledge products (ratings 3 and above) (percentage)                               | Readership survey           | Percentage of respondents giving a rating of 3 and above for quality, relevance and usefulness of IFAD's corporate knowledge products. This information will be complemented with more in-depth qualitative assessment.  |
| 1.1.3   | Relevant knowledge-intensive services (ratings 3 and above) (percentage)                         | Client survey               | Percentage of respondents giving a rating of 3 or above to relevance of knowledge-intensive services (Q4.2).   |
| 1.1.4   | SSTC knowledge exchange and cross learning (ratings 3 and above) (percentage)                    | Client survey               | Percentage of respondents giving a rating of 3 or above to whether IFAD is effective in leveraging SSTC to exchange knowledge and promote cross-learning across projects (Q7.7).   |
| <b>1.2</b>  | <b>Knowledge flows and quality operations</b>  |                             |  |
| 1.2.1   | COSOPs with comprehensive SSTC approach at design (percentage)                                   | COSOP                       | Percentage of COSOPs approved in the last 36 months with a comprehensive approach to SSTC.   |
| 1.2.2   | KM in country strategies (ratings 5 and above) (percentage)                                      | CCR/CSPE                    | Percentage of country strategies evaluated in the last 36 months rated 5 or above for knowledge management. CCRs will be used as a source to set baseline, target and track progress, whenever information is systematically available. As a proxy, ratings from CSPEs will be used to track progress on this indicator. Numbers presented for baseline and target are based on CSPE ratings database. |
| 1.2.3   | Lessons learned from supervision missions and PCRs (in ORMS used in project design) (percentage) | Project identification form | Percentage of lessons learned from supervision and completion, registered in ORMS, used in projects designed and approved in the last 12 months.   |

Figure 2: KM Results Framework at IFAD (excerpt)

**B. UNDP**

The UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017 envisioned the organization to be “a more knowledge-driven, innovative and open institution” and to achieve “greater organizational openness, agility and adaptability to harness knowledge, solutions and expertise”. This vision built the overarching frame of the UNDP KM Strategy<sup>10</sup>. The KM Strategy formulated the key objective to drive UNDP’s global leadership in achieving the outcome areas of the Strategic Plan and to focus on six areas of work:

1. Organizational Learning and Knowledge Capture
2. Knowledge networking
3. Openness and public engagement
4. South-South Cooperation and External Client-Services
5. Measurement and incentives
6. Talent management

These objectives were to be achieved through the implementation of 20 different initiatives, out of which 14 were later resourced and prioritized as follows:

<sup>10</sup> UNDP. 2014. UNDP Knowledge Management Strategy Framework. New York.

- A. Knowledge capture and lessons learning
  - Initiative 1: Lessons Learned Database
  - Initiative 2: Lessons Learned Capture
  - Initiative 3: Knowledge production and dissemination plans for Development Solutions Teams
  - Initiative 4: Revision of K-products development and dissemination process
- B. Knowledge exchange and networking
  - Initiative 5: Knowledge mobilization around Strategic Plan outcomes
  - Initiative 6: Re-alignment of UNDP's Knowledge Networks
  - Initiative 7: Redesign of the Mutual Support Initiative (MSI)
- C. Openness and knowledge sharing
  - Initiative 8: Public Blogging
  - Initiative 9: Public Online Dialogues and Consultations
  - Initiative 10: Regional South-South Knowledge Fairs
- D. Measurement and reporting
  - Initiative 11: Monitoring and reporting on UNDP's KM activities and progress
- E. KM and learning in HR and procurement
  - Initiative 12: Open UNDP-wide Expertise Roster
  - Initiative 13: Embedding KM in HR processes
  - Initiative 14: Knowledge Management Training

One of the activities (D.11) referred to developing a monitoring framework for KM at UNDP. This exercise led to the *drafting*<sup>11</sup> of a ToC and the development of a comprehensive results framework that built on and complemented existing monitoring mechanisms implemented by the organization. For example, the indicator “% of partners that indicate working with UNDP because of its “Thought leadership on the global development agenda” was to be informed by UNDP’s biennial Partnership Survey. The exercise also informed the development of new KM results monitoring instruments, such as *a survey that is (still) sent to users of UNDP’s knowledge products and other publications to assess the usefulness and use of these resources*<sup>12</sup>.

| Activities  | Outputs   | Immediate Outcomes   | Intermediate Outcomes  | Long-term Outcomes   |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review K-products development and dissemination process</li> <li>Capture lessons learned</li> <li>Create and populate lessons learned database</li> <li>Organize public online dialogues and consultations</li> <li>Create publicly accessible global online library for UNDP Knowledge Products</li> <li>Realign UNDP's Knowledge Networks</li> <li>Migrate social networks to Twitter</li> <li>Advise DSI on knowledge production and dissemination plans</li> <li>Integrate KM in quality assurance of UNDP strategies and projects</li> <li>Monitor and report on UNDP's KM activities and progress</li> <li>Etc.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge products</li> <li>Lessons Learned database</li> <li>Knowledge products database</li> <li>Lessons Learned (MSI)</li> <li>Procedures and guidelines (K-products development and dissemination, monitoring reports)</li> <li>Messages and products from knowledge networks (Twitter / Online dialogues)</li> <li>Knowledge services</li> <li>Knowledge Networks (technical support)</li> <li>Twitter supporter knowledge sharing (DSI)</li> <li>Online public dialogues</li> <li>Quality assurance of Lessons Learned and Knowledge Products (metadata, categorization, search, etc.)</li> <li>UNDP Intranet</li> <li>Etc.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNDP knowledge products are relevant, of high quality, and widely accessed</li> <li>UNDP knowledge services are easily accessible, of high quality, and in sustained demand</li> <li>UNDP's knowledge processes, services, products, and experts contribute to informing and influencing policy</li> <li>UNDP's knowledge processes, services, products, and experts contribute to inform and influence partners, public knowledge, and opinions</li> <li>UNDP acts as convenor and facilitator of policy dialogues and knowledge exchanges which otherwise would not take place</li> <li>External knowledge exchanges generate new partnerships and opportunities</li> <li>Experiences and lessons from projects and programmes are captured and made available to inform the design of new projects and programmes</li> <li>Transfer supporter knowledge sharing improves quality and achieve results</li> <li>UNDP staff members are well connected across the organization, interact frequently and work collaboratively</li> <li>Staff members have easy access to knowledge and information they need, and find what they are looking for quickly</li> <li>KM is integrated in UNDP HR procedures and performance systems</li> <li>UNDP's KM Advisory Services are in demand by UNDP business units and partners</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners' development debates and actions are informed and influenced by UNDP's knowledge products, services, experts, and thought leadership</li> <li>UNDP and partners become increasingly open, engaged in networking and knowledge exchanges, and collaborations supported by effective KM</li> <li>UNDP programmes and projects create and leverage knowledge to improve performance</li> <li>Knowledge management and learning are main part of UNDP culture, behaviors, and performance</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development practices and outcomes are improved through effective Knowledge Management</li> </ul> |

| Outcomes   | Indicators  | Means of verification  | 2013 (2012) | 2014 | 2015              |
|--|---|--|-------------|------|-------------------|
| <b>Intermediate outcome 1: Partners' development debates and actions are informed and influenced by UNDP's knowledge services, products, experts, and thought leadership</b> | 1.a. % of partners that indicate working with UNDP because of its "Thought leadership on the global development agenda"<br>1.b. Correlation between # of partners in the country giving high rating to the question "Ability to influence policy and build capacity" as a reason for working with UNDP and # of downloads of CO knowledge products  | Partnership survey<br><br>Correlation analysis (see 11)<br>Partnership survey and (1) Annual analytics of pdf downloads per country, (with consultant support)   | -           | -    | 16%               |
| 1.1. UNDP knowledge products (publications, reports, blogs, etc.) are relevant, of high quality, and widely accessed   | 1.1.a. % of UNDP knowledge products based on the needs and demands of partners<br>1.1.b. % of UNDP knowledge products developed with external partners' involvement<br>1.1.c. % of UNDP knowledge products developed according to a rigorous pipeline and quality assurance process<br>1.1.d. # of page views to UNDP global websites (EN, ES and FR)<br>1.1.e. # of downloads from all UNDP websites<br>1.1.f. # of unique visits to UNDP blog posts on UNDP global websites (EN, ES and FR) | Corporate KP Pipeline (with closed question on origin (16))<br>Corporate KP Pipeline (with closed question on involvement (16))<br>Comparison KP in pipeline year n-1 compared to new KP in global library year n<br>BERA statistics<br>BERA statistics<br>BERA statistics | -           | -    | 10.4M<br>1.26M    |
| 1.2. UNDP knowledge services (advisory support, web platforms, conferences, etc.) are easily accessible, of high quality, and in sustained demand                            | 1.2.a. # of responses from APFS and RC advisors<br>1.2.b. % of staff satisfied with UNDP policy services<br>1.2.c. % of staff satisfied with UNDP programme/project guidelines and support<br>1.2.d. % of partners selecting "Technical expertise" as a reason for working with UNDP<br>1.2.e. % of partners that favorably assess that UNDP has "high-quality professionals"<br>1.2.f. # of visits on UNDP knowledge platforms: TW   | BERA & DSI Rating survey (2014)<br>Pending global service tracker (2014)<br>HQPS (BDP in 2012 / being revised)<br>HQPS (BDP in 2012 / being revised)<br>Partnership survey<br>Partnership survey<br>DIG  | -           | -    | 65%<br>68%<br>94% |
| 1.3. UNDP's knowledge processes, services, products, and experts contribute to informing   | 1.3.a. % of partners indicating that they work with UNDP because of its "Policy advice"   | Partnership survey   | -           | -    | 26%               |

Figure 3: ToC for KM (draft) and KM Results Framework at UNDP (excerpt)

<sup>11</sup> The ToC was not a finalized nor published and remained a support tool to inform the KM results framework.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2016/10/3/Who-is-reading-UNDP-s-publications-and-why/>

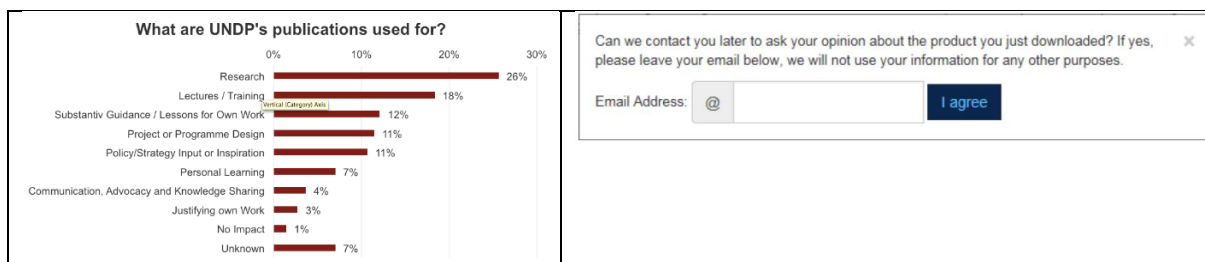


Figure 4: User survey of UNDP's Knowledge Products

### C. UNFPA

In 2019, the UNFPA Evaluation Office developed a strategy to enhance evaluation use through communications and knowledge management<sup>13</sup>. The strategy provides a results-based framework to strengthen evaluation use at UNFPA and beyond, using communications and knowledge management as a strategic approach. The strategy acknowledges that high quality, relevant, timely and credible evaluations are key to enhance use of evaluations. Since several UNFPA's strategic documents and mechanisms address these dimensions fully, the strategy specifically focuses on strengthening effective communication of evaluative knowledge to a targeted audience, within UNFPA and outside. The key areas of focus of the strategy cover:

- Strategic planning for communication of evaluative knowledge
- User-focused communications approach, catering to audience needs
- Relevant and diversified evaluation knowledge products for a range of audiences
- Minimum communications package for each centralized evaluation
- Availability and timely access to targeted evaluative knowledge for decision-making
- Results-based framework to measure success

The Strategy identifies activities to deliver the intended outputs, including outreach and dissemination instruments and knowledge sharing mechanisms. The KM strategy comes with a results framework that includes inter alia indicators on the *percentage of country programme documents and strategic / executive board reports that reflect uptake of evaluation references and evidence*.

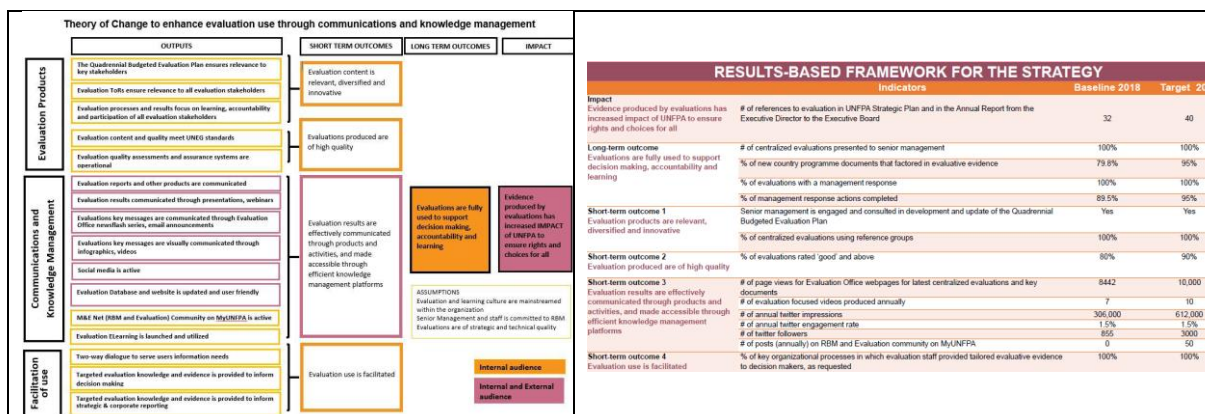


Figure 5: ToC for KM and KM Results Framework at UNFPA Evaluation Office

### D. UN Women

<sup>13</sup> UNFPA. 2019. Strategy to enhance evaluation use through communications and knowledge management 2018-2021. New York.

Developed in 2018, the KM Strategy of UN Women East and Southern Africa Region (ESARO)<sup>14</sup> views knowledge management as a critical enabler of UN Women’s operations and programmes in the region. The strategy is anchored within regional and global priorities, with a focus on strengthening collective institutional and peer learning, as well as knowledge sharing. The Strategy is premised on UN Women’s triple mandate (normative, coordination and operational) and is driven by innovation, synergies, coordination and learning for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the region. It is also aligned to UN Women Global Knowledge Management Strategy and is positioned for relevance of Gender within the UN Development System Reforms agenda led by the Secretary General of the United Nations.

This strategy lays out the foundations for effective KM for UN Women and provides a framework for standardization and prioritization of KM practices in UN Women at the regional level. The Strategy describes how UN Women shall create opportunities; develop and use systems, products and innovative approaches; and promote knowledge generation, sharing and utilization internally and externally with partners and stakeholders. The Strategy highlights three critical areas of interventions:

- (i) knowledge generation and prioritization
- (ii) knowledge sharing, dissemination and action, and
- (iii) leveraging human resources (HR) management for KM capacity in ESAR.

The Strategy further describes the contribution of KM to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also formulates **seven principles for effective KM** for UN Women in the region:

1. ESAR’s Knowledge Management shall always be people-centered with processes and technology being supportive functions.
2. The ESAR KM approach shall recognize women and girls as active participants in development in the region as well as recipients of services and products of UN Women’s interventions
3. To strengthen collective engagement in KM, ESARO shall develop evidenced based and demand driven knowledge products linked to quantitative and qualitative data based on the needs and experiences of stakeholders.
4. Partnerships and networks shall be pursued, including joint evidence-based research (and interventions to inform policy development, advocacy and implementation of UN Women Initiatives. All knowledge products shall be validated through technical reviews, individualized reviews, quality assurance group reviews and/or partner consultations and dialogues to strengthen UN Women’s knowledge products, policy guidance and programme proposals.
5. Knowledge is contextual- There shall be no one size fits all approach to KM in ESAR. Different KM initiatives shall be designed targeting specific audiences for specific aspects of KM.
6. Decentralization is key to KM - The strategy recommends an implementation approach where all multi and country offices implement KM practices in a decentralized manner that enhances knowledge production and sharing, fostering an organizational culture for KM.
7. Knowledge is an output and a key asset for organizational efficiency- The strategy believes effective KM prevents misuse of financial and human resources by effectively sharing knowledge across the organization and retaining it over time.

The KM Strategy provides a results framework with indicators such as *“Number of downloads and visits to the website on UN Women ESARO based publications”*; *“Number of countries supported by UN Women ESARO to engage in knowledge generation and exchange”*; *“Level of satisfaction on RO knowledge products by stakeholders”*.

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<sup>14</sup> UN Women. 2018. Knowledge Management Strategy East and Southern Africa. 2018-2021. Nairobi.



| Indicator   | Target (Year, Value)   | Baseline (Year, Value) | Data Source        |
|---|--|------------------------|--------------------|
| Number of country offices using ESAR flagship publications to inform policy advocacy and implementation on gender statistics                                      | 2018- Value: 3;<br>2019- Value: 5;<br>2020- Value: 7;<br>2021- Value: 7          | 2017- Value: 0         | RO monitoring data |
| Number of demand driven knowledge products produced at the regional level and disseminated to the country offices, key stakeholders and partners                  | 2018- Value: 22<br>2019- Value: 24<br>2020- Value: 26<br>2021- Value: 28         | 2017- Value: 20        | RO Monitoring      |
| Number of countries supported by UN Women ESARO to engage in knowledge generation and exchange  | 2018- Value: 22<br>2019- Value: 24<br>2020- Value: 26<br>2021- Value: 28         | 2017- Value: 10        | RO Monitoring      |
| Number of countries supported by UN Women ESARO to engage in knowledge generation and exchange  | 2018- Value: 11<br>2019- Value: 12<br>2020- Value: 13<br>2021- Value: 15         | 2017- Value: 10        | RO Monitoring      |
| Level of satisfaction on RO knowledge products by stakeholders  | 2021- Value: 100%  | 2016- Value: 93        | RO Monitoring      |
| Number of downloads and visits to the website on UN Women ESARO based publications  | 2018- Value: 3716<br>2019- Value: 5516<br>2020- Value: 7316<br>2021- Value: 9116 | 2017- Value: 1916      | RO Monitoring      |
| Number of countries and CSOs in ESAR supported through research and networking to increase women's engagement in peace processes and dialogues                    | 2018- Value: 1<br>2019- Value: 2<br>2020- Value: 3<br>2021- Value: 3             | 2017- Value: 1         | RO Monitoring      |
| Number of countries in ESAR supported through country researches and policy dialogues to develop and implement policies in support of gender responsive budgeting | 2018- Value: 4<br>2019- Value: 8<br>2020- Value: 10<br>2021- Value: 10           | 207- Value: 3          | RO Monitoring      |

Figure 6: KM Indicators at UN Women ESARO

## E. World Health Organization

The World Health Organization has been an early adopter of Knowledge Management<sup>15</sup>. The Organization has created a KM department in 2003 to coordinate at global level the range of KM activities that were already on-going but spread across WHO departments, such as publications, networks, staff development, knowledge translation, etc. The KM department was part of the Health Systems and Innovation cluster and became one of WHO largest departments with close to 65 staffs (professionals and support staff). The KM department was composed of 5 teams: Research and knowledge translation; WHO Press which focused on knowledge production (i.e. production of explicit knowledge such as flagship publications, WHO Bulletin, Guideline Review Committee, copyright, coordination of publishing policies, etc.); Library and Network for Knowledge, which focused on dissemination and access to explicit knowledge (dissemination activities through publications and databases; e-Health (applications of IT in health, e-learning, mobile health, etc.); and Global health ethics (research ethics, ethical procedures for research, global ethics committee, public health ethics, access to vaccines, distribution of drugs and non-discrimination, etc.).

The WHO developed its first Knowledge Management Strategy in 2005. The strategy established WHO KM vision of global health equity through better knowledge management and sharing. The KM mission

<sup>15</sup> Pan American Health Organization and World Health Organization. (2012). Strategy and Plan of Action on Knowledge Management and Communications. 28th Pan American Sanitary Conference. Washington. World Health Organization. (2012). Research Capacity Strengthening and Knowledge Management Strategy. Geneva.

World Health Organization. (2005). Knowledge Management Strategy. Geneva.

World Health Organization. (2009). WHO Knowledge Management Strategy 2010-2015. Geneva.

World Health Organization. (2015). Programme Budget 2016–2017. Geneva.

formulated to help bridging the “know-do gap” in global health by fostering an environment that encourages the creation, sharing, and effective application of knowledge to improve health. The key objectives of the strategy were to strengthen country health systems through better knowledge management, establish KM in public health, and enable WHO to become a better learning organization. Five strategic directions were identified: Improving access to the world’s health information, Translating knowledge into policy and action, Sharing and reapplying experiential knowledge, Leveraging e-Health in countries, and Fostering an enabling environment for the effective use of knowledge. Support was provided by the KM department to the technical programmes to achieve the KM objectives of the strategy.

The KM strategy for the period 2010-2015 was developed taking stock of the increased adoption of KM throughout the Organization while accounting for the requests formulated by Member States – through their country cooperation strategies– for WHO to provide technical assistance on various KM areas such as knowledge mapping, standardization and simplification of documents and processes, taking advantage of experiential knowledge, enabling collaboration and networking at all levels, or capacity building in knowledge management principles and tools. The need to rely on a modern KM strategy was spelled out in WHO Twelfth General Programme of Work 2014–2019. The Programme Budget 2018-2019 makes reference to and integrates KM in a number of work deliverables. Furthermore, KM is provided a specific outward looking outcome statement:

**Outcome 4.4: All countries having well-functioning health information, eHealth, research, ethics and knowledge management systems to support national health priorities.**

| Indicator   | Baseline     | Target        |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| Number of countries that have annual good quality equity-oriented public analytical reports for informing regular reviews of the health sector strategy | 80<br>(2017) | 100<br>(2019) |

**Output 4.4.3. Knowledge management policies, tools, networks and resources developed and used by WHO and countries to strengthen their capacity to generate, share and apply knowledge**

| Indicator  | Baseline      | Target        |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| Number of publications that synthesize evidence and provide policy options for decision-making | 400<br>(2017) | 440<br>(2019) |

In parallel, WHO developed in 2012 a Research Strategy<sup>16</sup>. The vision for the strategy is that decisions and actions to improve health and enhance health equity are grounded in evidence from research. The mission of the strategy was for the Secretariat, Member States and partners to work together to harness science, technology and broader knowledge in order to produce research-based evidence and tools for improving health. The strategy on research for health was grounded in three principles that would guide achievement of the goals and the realization of the vision:

- **Quality.** WHO aimed to commit itself to high-quality research that is ethical, expertly reviewed, efficient, effective, accessible to all, and carefully monitored and evaluated.
- **Impact.** WHO gave priority to research and innovation that had the greatest potential to improve global health security, accelerate health-related development, redress health inequities and helped to attain the Millennium Development Goals.
- **Inclusiveness.** The Secretariat undertook to work in partnership with Member States and stakeholders, to take a multisectoral approach to research for health, and to support and promote the participation of communities and civil society in the research process.

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<sup>16</sup> WHO. 2012. The WHO strategy on research for health. Geneva.



Five interrelated goals were defined to enable WHO to achieve the vision of the strategy:

- **Organization.** This involved the strengthening of the research culture across WHO.
- **Priorities.** This concerned the reinforcement of research (at national, regional and global levels, and within WHO) in response to priority health needs.
- **Capacity.** This related to the provision of support to the strengthening of national systems for health research.
- **Standards.** This concerned the promotion of good practice in research, drawing on WHO’s core function of setting norms and standards.
- **Translation.** This involved the strengthening of links between the policy, practice and products of research.

The strategy came with a results framework reflective of the five goals. It included for example outcome indicators such as *“percentage of Member States (specifically, their principal delegates at the Health Assembly) that report general satisfaction with the nature of technical cooperation received in support of their national health research system (capacity goal)”*

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• percentage of priority health needs for which up-to-date systematic reviews of the research literature were made available within one year of the need being identified (priorities goal)</li> <li>• percentage of a random sample of clinicians in Member States who achieve a nationally defined target for adherence to select high-quality, locally applicable recommendations (translation goal)</li> </ul>      |
| <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• percentage, within a random sample, of WHO’s guidelines that are aligned with the best available research evidence (Organization goal)</li> <li>• percentage of Member States (specifically, their principal delegates at the Health Assembly) that report general satisfaction with the nature of technical cooperation received in support of their national health research system (capacity goal)</li> </ul>    |
| <p><b>Outputs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• biennial report on progress in strengthening national health research systems submitted to the Health Assembly (capacity goal)</li> <li>• norms and standards for research published (standards goal)</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Inputs/activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at least 5% of WHO’s combined core and voluntary budgets allocated in support of research at WHO, including dedicated funds for the implementation and evaluation of the research strategy in the current biennium (Organization goal)</li> <li>• percentage of Member States whose priority-setting processes have been drawn on to inform priorities in research for health (priorities goal)</li> </ul> |

Figure 7: Research Indicators at WHO

**2.2. Meta-reviews and systemic analyses of RSKM Strategies and Approaches**

Several reviews and evaluations of RSKM in the UN system and in IFIs have been conducted since the early 2000s. As mentioned earlier, the JIU performed a review of KM in the UN system in 2007 and



- A number of the reports stressed that realizing the potential of IFIs to become more efficient in knowledge management depends on the strategies devoted to it.
- Several IFIs have been able to act as knowledge brokers.
- IFIs' goal to become better knowledge institutions has been only partly realized.
- The reports reviewed for this paper have exposed a number of problems with the way in which IFIs manage and operationalize their knowledge agendas, research work and the production of studies.
- Several reports found that KPS are often created through a supply-driven approach.
- Several evaluation studies have pointed out the need to capture and codify tacit knowledge so it can be used beyond the circumstances in which it was gained.
- The quality of IT systems for the collection and sharing of information is sometimes weak.
- The overall knowledge output has some excellent signature products and flagships but quality is highly uneven.
- Impacts of knowledge management are hard to establish.
- Creating cutting-edge knowledge of new global issues, or of frontier issues, is a key responsibility of IFIs but the evaluations criticized IFIs for not succeeding very well in this objective.
- Some evaluations argued that insufficient attention is being paid to the voices of the poor themselves.
- Evaluation practices covering knowledge management need to be strengthened and harmonized.

This synthesis study identified some lessons for improving knowledge management programs that are applicable across IFIs:

1. Strengthen knowledge planning by improving the clarity on knowledge management concepts and roles of the institution, and by improving coordination of knowledge efforts
2. Incentivize staff to enhance knowledge creation and quality
3. Improve use of IT infrastructure and social media and enable codifying and sharing of tacit knowledge
4. Measure the use of knowledge for operations

## **2.3. Evaluations of RSKM Strategies and Approaches**

### **A. FAO's Contribution to Knowledge**

The evaluation in 2015 of FAO's contribution to knowledge on food and agriculture<sup>23</sup> assessed FAO's knowledge products and services, such as publications, databases, networks, and learning resources. These are core elements to fulfil the Organisation's mandate to "collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate information relating to nutrition, food and agriculture. The evaluation assessed the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of FAO's knowledge products and services, including quality assurance and dissemination processes. The report provided the following key findings:

- FAO knowledge products and services are largely consistent with the Organization's mandate. There is however limited involvement of users and potential partners at the design stage, especially from key target groups such as national governments. More consistent involvement of such users and partners would further enhance the relevance of FAO knowledge products and services.

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<sup>23</sup> FAO. 2015. Evaluation of FAO's Contribution to Knowledge on Food and Agriculture. Rome.

- Most FAO knowledge products and services are frequently accessed and read, but some need to increase their visibility and accessibility, especially in terms of language coverage and online access. Furthermore, some knowledge products and services should be better designed and more user-oriented in order to enhance their utility.
- FAO knowledge products and services are widely recognized for their technical excellence. The Organization provides guidance and mechanisms to ensure the quality of technical content. Some gaps exist, however, especially at implementation level. Overall, end users and experts have a positive opinion of (and high expectations for) the quality of FAO databases and publications. This positive assessment should serve as an incentive to both strengthen and consistently apply quality assurance mechanisms for all knowledge products and services.
- FAO knowledge products and services are produced in a decentralized manner, and generally operated on a shoestring budget. In particular, few resources are devoted to dissemination activities, which limit outreach to potential new users. Although cooperation with external partners has helped to cope with the lack of resources, there has been less cooperation between authoring and decentralized offices, between technical and communication experts, and among operators. Greater internal cooperation and coordination would enhance their efficiency.
- Although there appear to be few duplications, knowledge gaps exist in some thematic areas, especially those addressing specialized topics. FAO data, analyses and learning resources are often disseminated through unrelated platforms and channels.
- The extent varies to which user-groups are effectively reached by, and make effective use of, FAO's knowledge products and services. International organizations, national governments, research and academia benefit the most from FAO data and information. Country-level users, especially from developing regions with poorer internet connectivity and/or language coverage, face more problems accessing FAO data, analyses and resources, and demand context-relevant knowledge products and services.
- FAO knowledge products and services have contributed to enhancing technical knowledge and analyses, and strengthening the evidence base for policies and programmes. User feedback is not systematically collected, and the influence and results achieved by FAO knowledge products and services are rarely recorded, especially at organizational and policy levels. Furthermore, opportunities to capitalize on successful experiences are often missed.

The evaluation formulated the following high-level recommendations:

1. FAO could pay greater attention to users' and learners' needs, as well as the potential for improving ease of use and expanding the resources' influence to a broader audience.
2. FAO should continue to strengthen the mechanisms and measures in place to ensure technical excellence of its knowledge products and services.

## **B. UNDP Human Development Reports**

UNDP undertook in 2015 the evaluation of the global and regional Human Development Reports (HDRs), assessing the contributions of global and regional HDRs published from 2004 to 2013<sup>24</sup>. Specifically, the evaluation aimed to: (a) assess the contribution of global HDRs to intellectual and analytical public policy debates; (b) assess the contribution of regional HDRs to policy discourse and advocacy at the regional level and public policy processes at the national level; (c) assess the contributions of global and regional HDRs to UNDP engagement in global and regional public discourse and advocacy and national public policy processes; (d) identify factors that explain the contributions of global and regional HDRs; and (e) present key findings, conclusions and recommendations to inform management decisions.

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<sup>24</sup> UNDP. 2015. Evaluation of the Contribution of the Global and Regional Human Development Reports to Public Policy Processes. New York.

Some of the key findings highlighted by the evaluation of the UNDP's flagships include:

- The global HDRs were used to a greater extent in national-level public policy processes than in global- and regional-level public debates. The degree to which global HDRs were used varied considerably across the reports and among different groups of development actors.
- The global HDRs did not have a niche audience and the extent of use was low among policy intermediaries (e.g. civil society organizations (CSOs), academics, think tanks). In a majority of cases, their use by government actors was contingent upon use by policy intermediaries. Therefore, low use by policy intermediaries decreased the level of use by government actors and policymakers.
- The global HDRs were not well targeted at different groups of development actors, thus reducing their potential use in public policy processes. CSO use of global HDRs has decreased over the years. Many civil society actors find the global HDRs increasingly lacking in striking messages that can be used in their advocacy work. Overall, the HDI was the most used content of the reports.
- The global HDRs contributed to bridging the concept and application of human development to development policy. Uniqueness of approach and what policy boundaries (if any) that the report pushed determined the level of contribution. There were some outstanding reports that contributed to national-level policy processes.
- The global HDRs familiarized the human development perspective in public policy.
- Global HDRs had limited influence on UNDP strategies and programmes.
- The global HDR policy recommendations informed policy processes when the report took a clear position on the subject discussed. The reports of the past five years were often seen as compromising on core messages and hence making limited contributions to transformative debates. Moreover, in a majority of cases the global HDRs did not provide practical solutions to human development challenges. While this was a deliberate strategy, most development actors perceived it as a weakness of the global HDRs.
- The ineffective dissemination of key messages constrained the potential of global HDRs to influence thematic areas. UNDP did not adequately promote the reports beyond global and country report launches. Poor dissemination of global HDR messages was one of the factors in the level of use of the reports' thematic content.
- The credibility of the global HDRs depended on the analytical and intellectual leadership provided by the HDRO; the choices of the HDRO Director were seen as crucial for this. The editorial discretion of the global HDRs has been central to General Assembly resolution 57/264 (2003), and has been critical for the HDRs to avoid political pressures pertaining to report content. The extent to which this independence firewall was ensured varied across reports; recent reports inadequately maintained the editorial discretion that the HDRO could exercise.

The evaluation formulated several recommendations, including:

- Recommendation 1: Given its positive reputation, the global HDR has the potential to keep human development on the agenda of public debate and policy process. The time is ideal to relaunch the idea of human development much more strategically and to help UNDP regain the intellectual space in the global development discourse that it once commanded. It is also recommended that factors causing damage to the reputation of the report and its contribution be addressed.
- Recommendation 4: UNDP should take adequate measures to enhance the influence of the global HDR on the public policy process. The role of UNDP programme units is extremely important in this regard.
- Recommendation 5: The management of the global HDRs needs to be adequately strengthened to provide a stable environment for preparation of the report and to enhance the reputation of the reports.

### C. Knowledge Flow and Collaboration in the World Bank

In 2019 the Independent Evaluation Group delivered an evaluation of the World Bank’s Knowledge Flow and Collaboration<sup>25</sup>. The evaluation’s purpose was to assess how well the World Bank’s current operating model stimulates knowledge flow and how well it enhances collaboration to deliver “integrated solutions”—or multisector and multiservice tasks and approaches—to clients. The operating model is defined to encompass organizational structures such as Practice Groups, Global Practices (GPs), and Global Themes (GTs); internal processes, such as budgeting, quality assurance, and strategic directions; and staff roles and reporting arrangements. The evaluation also looked at the incentives and behaviors the model inculcates. Specifically, it evaluated how well the model has contributed to global knowledge flow—the generation and movement of customized knowledge among staff and across geographic regions and organizational structures—and to collaboration for integrated solutions.

Selected highlights of the evaluation’s main findings include:

- The new operating model was found to encourage knowledge flow. Many Global Practices have structured processes to manage the substantial knowledge and learning embedded across their financing, analytics, and convening activities. Shifting technical work away from regional units into Global Practices and Global Teams, which are designed to be globally integrated, improved knowledge flow and staff mobility across Regions, made it simpler to mobilize expertise for client-facing activities, and sometimes deepened expertise in operationally relevant areas.
- Each Global Practice manages knowledge differently; some are more strategic than others. Global Practices with a coherent and strategic approach address knowledge gaps by creating and organizing knowledge and then transferring it to support operations. They use various mechanisms to do this, including staff cross support, staff rotations across Regions, staff and client trainings, online knowledge platforms, South-South knowledge exchanges, knowledge hubs in country offices, and knowledge communities like Global Solutions Groups.
- A gap exists between the reform’s aspirations to deepen knowledge curation and sharing within Global Practices and the current reality. Some Global Practices have strategic approaches to knowledge; others do not. No metrics measure how business units perform on knowledge. Larger country programs tend to attract global knowledge far more easily than smaller ones. The mechanisms designed to promote knowledge excellence have mixed results. Global Solutions Groups have performed unevenly, with few consistent mechanisms to channel knowledge into country programs.
- The effectiveness of Global Leads as knowledge brokers has varied widely across Global Practices and individuals. For these reasons, the Global Lead role has been recast in many Global Practices.
- Concerns with the quality assurance process for operations and Advisory Services and Analytics products persist, though no hard data exist on the quality at entry. In the former operating model, Regions had greater responsibility for providing quality control, relying also on development effectiveness units. In the current operating model, this quality assurance moved to the Global Practices and the role of regional development effectiveness units was weakened.
- Leadership and funding, especially access to trust funds, explain variation in Advisory Services and Analytics production and knowledge flow. Trust funds are not always aligned with World Bank management’s priorities.

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<sup>25</sup> World Bank Group. 2019. Knowledge Flow and Collaboration under the World Bank’s New Operating Model. IEG. Washington D.C.



- Many positive examples show Global Practices collaborating on multisector activities designed to address clients' critical challenges. Also, silos among Regions have decreased, as evidenced in increased interregional cross support. At the same time, the operating model is heavy on competition and transaction costs and makes collaboration for integrated solutions unnecessarily complicated. Silos across sectors have worsened. Inter- Global Practice cross support has declined. Staff are generally concerned with operational collaboration under the new operating model. Global Practices collaborate more on analytical work than on lending operations and collaborate more within than across Global Practices, according to a social network analysis.
- Strong leadership is necessary for collaboration to happen. Apart from Country Director leadership, collaboration is strongest on initiatives with high visibility to senior management because prominent initiatives create an incentive structure that reduces infighting. This is partially why urgent situations, such as crises or disasters, bring out the best collaboration: they are often the most prominent and highly visible Bank Group engagements.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

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1. Many organizations have developed a Theory of Change and a detailed results framework to help elicit long term RSKM goals and causal chains.
2. Several organizations acknowledged that leadership is critical to RSKM success.
3. Some organizations have set ambitious RSKM strategies and approaches and have devised an organizational architecture that supports these objectives (i.e. structure follows strategy).
4. Several organizations have identified the need to better internalize from the strategic level down to programmes and projects the knowledge conveyed by the research and knowledge products they develop.
5. Some organizations have devised measures and instruments to monitor the usefulness, use and influence of their RSKM strategies and approaches.
6. Establishing the right balance between centralization and devolution of roles and responsibilities for RSKM development and implementation is often difficult to find.