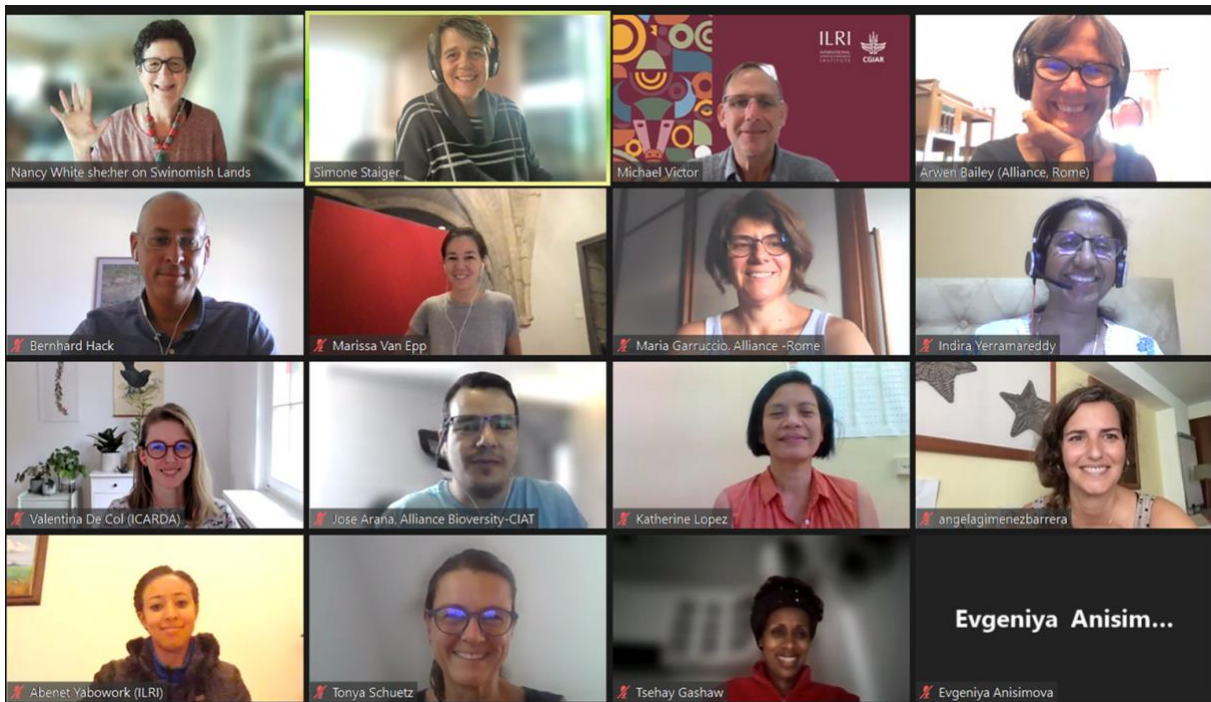


Reimagining how we engage, collaborate, and manage knowledge to transform food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis.

Prepared by the
Knowledge Management Group of the Communications and Outreach Transition Task Force

Context: A Communications and Outreach (C&O) Transitions Task Team working group was formed to engage with colleagues and develop recommendations on how to systematically strengthen knowledge management and sharing within CGIAR. This document is the result of a 6-month engagement and discussion process. The document identifies 5 priority challenges and proposes 5 corresponding options to initially address them. This is presented to CGIAR leadership to discuss how to proceed and constitute a group across the CGIAR to implement this work. In the Annex, we include more information about the history of knowledge management in the CGIAR, the process carried out and who was involved.



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1. What's at stake?

Transforming the world's food, land and water systems is a complex and 'wicked problem'. Wicked problems require an integrated social approach to co-design and negotiate a common understanding and allow multiple perspectives to be involved. Solutions typically require many people to change their mindsets and behavior. CGIAR has recognized this by carrying out a major reorganization of its structures and ways of working which has brought together the network of 13 centers of more than 9,000 staff working in five regions in more than 70 countries.

CGIAR commits in its strategy to "increase internal capacity across the Action Areas through strengthening and sharing common tools, standards, data sets, cutting-edge science, and knowledge management". To gain in innovation capacity and deepen the knowledge co-creation and exchange among disciplines, structures and networks, the organization needs a knowledge management approach to facilitate effective connections and collaborations in and outside the CGIAR, as well as access to information, tools, and data.

Given the social diversity of CGIAR staff and teams, the ongoing re-organization, and the extraordinary number of partners it works with, **productive person-to-person, team-to-team, team-to-partner knowledge exchange, sharing and learning are key to unleashing the innovative potential of all the system components**. We talk of many types of knowledge - not just scientific, also social, indigenous, experimental, and so on - of all the individuals across CGIAR partners and collaborators innovating alongside and with CGIAR. Applying innovative, inclusive, and participatory knowledge management approaches is critical to build social linkages and capital across teams and with partners, and it should be a major focus of this dedicated effort to deliver impact within CGIAR innovation ecosystems.

To successfully bring about these results, CGIAR needs to be able to bring together people across disciplines and organizational structures and create spaces for learning and creation (i.e., communities of practice). It must facilitate and document multi-stakeholder processes of co-creation, ideation, innovation, learning, sense-making, and foresight. It needs to listen to, empower and mentor early career researchers who bring in new ideas and concepts. Finally, it needs to create an 'open culture' where data and information is openly accessible and workflows across centers, science groups and support services breaking silos.

This framework argues that CGIAR needs to strengthen knowledge management processes and systems, especially paying greater attention to knowledge sharing and exchange that provide the soft 'glue' that brings people and science together to deliver powerful and well-coordinated outcomes for CGIAR. The framework links KM to the research and planning cycle and highlights how KM approaches are embedded across the research effort.

Challenges

Five principal challenges were raised:

1. **Information access** – It is essential to build a culture of (digital) openness and knowledge sharing, make information accessible, and improve quick and effective access to different technologies and access information resources. CGIAR centers have worked to develop interoperable datasets and common metadata for research outputs. As we move to OneCGIAR there can be efficiencies in scale in having one repository for knowledge products that can service multiple needs (corporate, performance management, communications, cross system translation – improved analysis).

2. **Silos and fragmentation** – in the new CGIAR structure, knowledge sharing can act as the glue that links and connects people across the system. We need to connect people across initiatives and centers to accelerate learning, improve efficiencies, and stimulate innovation (Communities of Practice), creating the connections for co-creation, innovation and acceleration of learning. From a tool perspective, MS Teams has limited functionalities when we want to create conversations, document learning, and share information and knowledge with multiple partners outside of CGIAR.
3. **Stakeholder engagement** – CGIAR can do better in effectively engaging, co-creating and learning with its stakeholders. Recent critical discussions about how CGIAR takes on board the priorities of partners and other stakeholders reveal the need for applying knowledge sharing principles and tools to ensure that stakeholder engagement is effective.
4. **Knowledge into use** – CGIAR communications tends to focus on institutional communications and communicating outcome and impact stories for resource mobilization. Even though CGIAR researchers and centers have a rich history of using communication tools to reach end users (farmers, policy makers, NGOs, stakeholders, etc.), knowledge management for development approaches has not been systematically supported nor have the learnings been institutionalized.
5. **Knowledge systems** – *“For many, leaving the power in the hands of Western donors and international organizations represents a form of neocolonialism and hinders effective development work.”* (DEVEX, The Localization agenda, July 2022). The need to recognize that development systems and structures are power bound and reinforce past colonial practices has been acknowledged increasingly. CGIAR itself has dealt with perceptions that it does not consider enough the perspectives of southern institutions nor other non-formalized knowledge systems (such as indigenous knowledge). Current trends toward locally led development and discussions around the need to decolonize R4D knowledge have not yet been systematically addressed within CGIAR. Rather CGIAR has been exposed to criticism of its centralized approach to the OneCGIAR reform.

2. Proposed framework and action

The below framework illustration is organized around a generic, 6-step research for development planning cycle as knowledge management practices cut across all stages. For each step, some typical KM/KS solutions are proposed, four value propositions are suggested as well as 5 priority action areas.

Value proposition: Knowledge management can enhance collaboration, networking and facilitate inclusive multi-stakeholder interaction and ensure CGIAR information is openly accessible. This is essential for speeding up CGIAR innovation, capitalizing on system complementarities, and delivering CGIAR's priority research outcomes.

Outcomes: *By acting on the above challenges* expected outcomes from knowledge management interventions are as follows:

1. **Ensuring information access:** CGIAR knowledge is openly accessible and is being accessed and used by internal and external users. *KM will add value by organizing and curating information, knowledge and data to increase open access discovery, dissemination and delivery of research products and outputs*
2. **Breaking silos and fragmentation:** Scientists and stakeholders are using available resources and information to improve their R4D work. *KM will allow scientists use networks and community exchanges to increase efficiencies and innovation by tapping into and contributing to the pool of discipline knowledge while working in multidiscipline teams on global social problems.*
3. **Engaging stakeholders:** Scientists apply new ways of working and engaging with each other, next users and end users and partners are involved in demand-driven research. *KM will bring*

together and connect people across disciplines, teams and structures; providing effective and inclusive co-creation, design and ideation spaces for more impactful science and innovation

4. **Knowledge into use:** Next users participate in demand-driven research and are applying co-developed research outputs. *KM will add value by facilitating and documenting inclusive learning, reflection, synthesis and multi-stakeholder processes that improve practice and power innovation*
5. **Knowledge systems:** CGIAR researchers and staff recognize the importance of decolonizing knowledge systems and use mechanisms in their research and work that allow for multiple perspectives and voices. *KM will add value by supporting conversations on decolonialization of knowledge and identify tools and approaches that can be used in research and program planning.* CGIAR identifies and nurtures research on how to integrate different knowledge and applies it to itself.

As the suggested framework shows below, KM is a critical process along all steps of the research cycle. KM is not just about the tools and technologies for sharing and storing information but more importantly about the enabling environment (or the glue) that connects researchers staff within the CGIAR as well as to our external stakeholders through the following ways:

- **Culture** (people, cultures, diversity),
- **Processes** (participation, inclusion, coordination, results-orientation), and
- **Resources** (technology, finance, availability, accessibility, applicability)



Illustration: The suggested framework for the development of a CGIAR knowledge management action plan.

Five opportunities

Based on the assessment of activities that are currently under the rubric of knowledge management, five opportunities were identified. As a next step, given appropriate resources, smaller groups could engage in these activities by coming up with a 1-year workplan (2022 November-2023 October) with periodic sharing and learning amongst the teams to review and adjust.

Challenge	Solution	Next Steps	Internal partners working with KM group of C&O	Progress indicator
Information access / Ensure knowledge is open access, interoperable and efficiently managed across CGIAR	Standardize repositories	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use CGSpace as an interim One CGIAR repository and train center staff not using CGSpace how to use. Roll out for use by CGIAR widely (research initiatives, Systems Office, and capacity building of repository managers) 2. Promote and train staff in the use of CGSpace 3. Form a pan CGIAR governance team to address issues of building a long-term solution 4. Establish network with CAADP X4P institutions to share and exchange research outputs. 	Digital & Data services, Program Coordination Unit (PCU)	After the first reporting period in 2023 at least 90% of all outputs from research initiatives, Systems Organization and platforms are in CGSpace.
Silos and Fragmentation / community connections	Accelerate learning through community connections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify where Communities of Practice (CoP) are already being established within the CGIAR and the support they need 2. Capitalize and learn from past experiences in the CGIAR and outside to develop 'good practice' and resources that staff can use. 3. Set up a series of interactions with CoP community managers to share and exchange learnings 	Digital and Data services, Partnerships and advocacy, internal communications	Have at least 60% of the initiatives starting to use conversational tools/platforms with partner and teams
Stakeholder engagement / Facilitate use of more inclusive conversational tools for knowledge sharing	Accelerate collaboration through virtual tools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify where strong informal collaboration is happening and note tools/platforms and processes for potential expansion. 2. Test out tools/platforms and processes with research initiatives that are interested in developing such tools and/or communities of practice (NPS, UU, etc.) 3. Get involved in CGIAR wide events to ensure structures and processes for discussions and collaboration are inclusive and allow multiple perspectives to be heard 	Researchers, research initiatives leads, Program Coordination Unit (PCU)	New CoPs are created, membership increases, participation in the CoP of CoPs is active, and a periodic survey and interviews with random CoP members indicates that they are gaining value

Challenge	Solution	Next Steps	Internal partners working with KM group of C&O	Progress indicator
Knowledge into use / Make knowledge travel further through KM and Comms 4dev approaches	Create a CGIAR body of work on KM for development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement a knowledge capitalization exercise to rapidly learn from comms/KM4Dev activities in the CGIAR (what worked and didn't, who are the champions and experts) and share in a paper and through webinars 2. Identify research initiatives and projects looking to strengthen this area of work and provide support through the champions 3. Work with and through FARA and the emerging KM4Africa framework that has been established 4. 	Researchers, research initiatives leads, Program Coordination Unit (PCU), external partners	Researchers actively seek out communication support for such activities, communications units offer support / have the talent.
Knowledge systems / Decolonization	Identify hotspots to decolonize knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Link up with the current group/s discussing decolonization of knowledge in CGIAR 2. Assess the current KM/KS ecosystem: Decolonization opportunities along the research cycle (proposal, inception, implementation, delivery, social inclusion, capacity development, MEL, communications) 3. Discuss the concept with CGIAR leadership (i.e., with Managing director Regions and Partnerships and AA directors) and improve the way we communicate, monitor, and evaluate the way we work with partners. hold a webinar/learning discussion to share and get further feedback 4. Develop a KM framework with CAADP partners (FARA, SROs and NARS) 	Researchers, research initiatives leads, Program Coordination Unit (PCU), Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL),	Concrete engagement with Southern partners on how to communicate development work in a way that represents Southern knowledge systems

3. Monitoring evaluation

We propose to align the monitoring and evaluation of our KM/KS activities following what we preach in the approved Performance and Results Management Framework (PRMF) for the research work under One CGIAR and its impact delivery portfolio of Initiatives. This includes that we monitor KM/KS activities on the outputs and outcome level towards the proposed One CGIAR corporate common indicators¹ (capacity development, policies, innovations, data assets and any additional suitable KM/KS related indicators). CGIAR wide monitoring of communications, KM/KS related activities has been piloted and set up over the past two years and is delivering promising results to inform decisions on investment into the wider ranged options and field of KM/KS activities. These draw data and information from repositories, and acknowledge analytical tools.

¹ [CGIAR Performance and Results Management Framework 2022-2030](#) - Companion document to the CGIAR 2030 Research & Innovation Strategy Approved by the System Council at its 11th meeting on 17 December 2020, SC/M11/DP2

Annexes

1. How we developed this framework

Knowledge management was not explicitly mentioned nor recognized as a core approach to catalyze change within in either the current CGIAR Research and Innovation strategy or the new One CGIAR operating structure.

Recognizing this, under the Communications and Outreach Transition Task Team a working group on Knowledge Management was established. Because knowledge management is a cross cutting discipline, the working group encompassed and engaged with a range of staff across the CGIAR ecosystems (digital services, researchers, program coordination, impact at scale, etc.). The working group was divided into two task teams: knowledge sharing and knowledge services.

In developing this strategy, the team carried out a range of assessments, interviews and workshops (both within and outside the CGIAR) to ensure diverse perspectives were included as well as that the framework was owned across the system.

In addition, a group of staff from African CGIAR Centers participated in the [FARA KM4agdevelopment Challenge](#). As part of this, they joined up with staff from FARA, ASEARECA, CARDESSA and AFSA to develop a draft Knowledge Management Partnership Framework for AR4D in Africa that will guide knowledge management activities in Africa. This work contributed and influenced the development of this framework, and the partnership will form a key part of the next steps to implement greater collaboration with African R4D institutions.

2. CGIAR Knowledge Management – a rich history

Knowledge management and sharing have been part of CGIAR strategies in the past, as shown in the following illustration. CGIAR’s knowledge management experience has been recognized externally but never formally recognized internally as a core function or area of expertise – though there are a core group of staff across the system that would consider themselves knowledge practitioners.

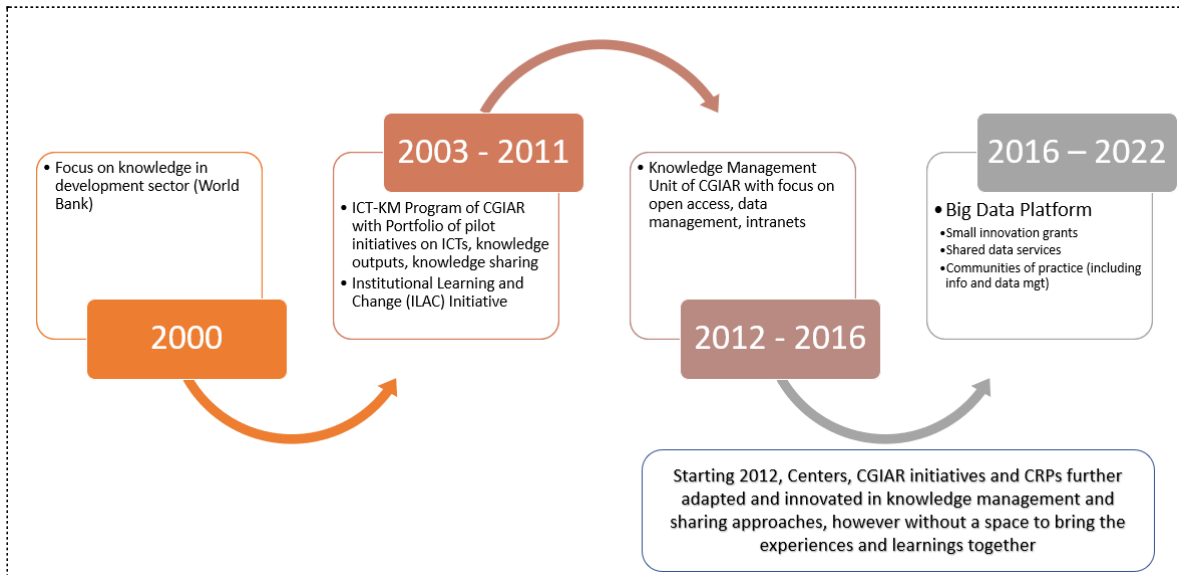


Illustration: Knowledge sharing and management in CGIAR since 2000

In many ways, CGIAR experiences reflect the wider KM4Dev environment, with interventions and achievements in organizing and providing enhanced access to explicit knowledge (described and tangible) and supporting collaboration and a greater awareness of participatory processes. Some main achievements have been an increase in shared IT services (Sharepoint and MS teams), much better access to CGIAR digital knowledge, information and data products through open access repositories, and the Open Access policy.

Pockets of a more intentional knowledge sharing culture are visible, with increased use of facilitation and learning processes, often in partnership with other organizations (IFAD, FAO) or through individual contributions to the Knowledge Management for Development (KM4Dev) community of practice. Several publications like the [Knowledge Management and Communication \(KMC\) briefs](#), the [ILAC briefs](#) or multiple articles in KM journals have been produced and there is a wealth of informal blogposts and other social reporting from Centers and CRPs (such as <https://maarifa.ilri.org/>). In 2019, ILRI was awarded the [International Prize in knowledge management](#). Likewise, many innovative approaches and tools that CRPs and previously Challenge Programs have explored and introduced (some examples are formal and informal communities of practice, various collaboration tools like wikis, blogs, social media, participatory meetings and event design and facilitation, write shops). However, those gains were not systematically taken up at the broader CGIAR level.

3. Acknowledgements

This development of this framework was written/prepared by the following people

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