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# KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

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REGIONAL BUREAU NAIROBI  
**2021-2023**

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# INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

1. In 2016, WFP commenced work to develop a corporate Knowledge Management (KM) Strategy through consultations with staff across country offices, Regional Bureaux and HQ. The Executive Management Group endorsed the strategy in February 2017 and since then, WFP has been exploring staged implementation options to ensure that knowledge management in WFP is sustainable and valued with the flexibility to evolve over time.
2. WFP's KM Strategy considers three building blocks: people, processes and systems. The Key objectives of the corporate strategy are:
  - a. Strengthening the evidence base for good decision-making by documenting good practice and lessons learned;
  - b. Increase efficiency and effectiveness by applying good practices and putting lessons learned into practice;
  - c. Improve policy, guidance and tools;
  - d. Enhance sharing with governments and partners;
  - e. Strengthen the connection among experts;
  - f. Broaden the knowledge base of WFP staff; and,
  - g. Strengthening global and regional advocacy.
3. Outlined in the corporate strategy is the need for a WFP-wide KM approach that requires an evolution of our work culture and roles as well as existing processes and systems, focusing on establishing the minimum consistent infrastructure to increase coordination, formalize roles, standardize common processes and bring together headquarters and country systems. This is a cultural transformation for WFP, not just a procedural or technological one, requiring strong leadership and the involvement of all staff acting as "knowledge brokers".
4. At WFP, knowledge generated at the field level reinforces WFP's capacity to deliver on the CSPs. Together with experiences, partnerships, and expertise nurtured over time, quality services such as technical assistance to governments, South-South Cooperation, and policy engagements with various institutions is needed to maximize on these field experience, expertise, and knowledge through various initiatives. RBN recognises the value of KM, and its important role in this regard.
5. It is through this recognition of the importance of KM that WFP RBN<sup>1</sup> has developed a new regional KM strategy for the period 2021-2023. The strategy is tailored to country needs and contexts. It will support the RB, as well as the countries in the region, to effectively and efficiently capture, synthesize, manage, use, and share knowledge emerging from their Country Strategic Plans (CSP) implementation, to increase program quality and effectiveness.
6. This regional strategy outlines the approaches to becoming a successful KM organization, the key stakeholders and the critical success factors. A Theory of Change outlines how the RBN will become a strong, knowledge-centred region. Supporting this regional KM strategy is an implementation plan and a communications plans which can be found in the Annex section.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

7. WFP in the Eastern Africa Region needs to be agile to the constant changing contexts in the region, responsive to the new emerging challenges, and innovative in providing solutions to address the challenges of delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 (Zero Hunger) and 17 (Partnership for the Goals). To do this, WFP must institutionalize learning and adaptation as a continuous process and leverage the best available knowledge from evidence and practice, from both internal and external sources, for comparative advantage.
8. This strategy is informed by country KM assessments, desk reviews and evaluations that were conducted, which have collectively recommended the need for a more integrated KM approach throughout the organization. The analysis showed that although WFP has a plethora of knowledge throughout the organization, the concept of Knowledge Management is yet to be fully embedded nor sufficiently integrated in the organisation, to support learning and improvements. The various assessment conducted recommended that WFP continue to build an evidence base, and a robust knowledge management strategy that would allow WFP to accumulate a broad knowledge base regionally.
9. WFP's Regional Bureau in Nairobi (RBN) covers ten operational countries in Eastern Africa<sup>2</sup> : Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. KM assessments conducted in 4 countries, 7 field offices, and units in the regional bureau, identified several gaps and challenges, including: an absence of a systematic approach to KM, limited understanding of the KM among staff, limited access to knowledge, poor culture of information capture and sharing, lack of accountability and governance, and lack of an enabling environment and systems to support KM.
10. While these countries all worked to deliver on the Country Strategic Plans (CSPs), partner with governments and other institutions, with some having huge budgetary allocations, they did not fully leverage on learning from both internal and external knowledge to set WFP apart as a credible partner of choice. They did not effectively leverage internal and external evidence and knowledge to position WFP as a thought leader in different strategic thematic areas. The visibility of WFP's work and its impact in the region was highly wanting with COs being rather reactive in their operations rather than proactive given the conditionality of humanitarian workers to respond quickly to emergencies and focus less on the Changing lives agenda. Shifting this narrative might help behavioural change towards KM.
11. Resources may have not been used efficiently because COs did not learn from each other. Where initiatives could be replicated, they were not; where lessons could have been learned, same mistakes were made; where technology could be enabled for information access, energy was spent implementing CO specific technology. As a result, knowledge and evidence were either 'hidden' or lost.
12. Knowledge Management is ignored by most countries in the region, with Ethiopia CO being the only country with aspects of Knowledge Management embedded in their CSP and a dedicated Knowledge Management Officer.
13. KM is critical to leverage fundraising, build partnerships, advocate, enhance the visibility of WFPs contribution to a wide range of technical areas and social issues and position WFP as a credible organisation, and partner of choice, not only in supply chain but also in other areas such as Food Systems, the hunger-conflict cycle and, Social Protection. Strong knowledge management will. work as an enabler to ensure better measurement of WFP's impact, and strengthening the evidence base for WFP programming.
14. Identifying, validating and properly documenting innovations, lessons learned, and good practices is necessary for WFP to become a learning organisation and in the pursuit of programme excellence. These processes not only institutionalize organizational learning, but also help in the generation of new ideas, improved demonstration of human rights-based approaches and promotion of evidence-based advocacy.

15. WFP Strategic Plan 2017-2021, Country Strategic Plans and Portfolio Budgets have marked the largest transformation in WFP in the last 20 years that came with introduction of the SDGs and the UN reform. KM, together with Research, Analysis and Monitoring (RAM), Communications, Advocacy, and Marketing (CAM), and Evaluation strategies, have a principal role in contributing to the generation of sound and credible evidence in every stage of the CSP cycle. Starting from the design of the CSP (where broader contextual analysis is important), KM and its key stakeholders must ensure that analysis and learning from implementation, mid-term reviews and evaluation phases are firmly embedded in CSPs. It is critical that this evidence continuum be considered from the initial conception of CSPs.
16. The Regional KM Strategy will serve to ensure that COs in RBN institutionalise KM in CSPs, that the evidence continuum is well articulated.
17. As part of the UN Reforms initiatives, WFP RBN participates in the Africa Knowledge Management Hub and contributes to the KM initiatives on the continent by sharing its best practices and expertise based on its strengths, hence creating a shared value.

# STRATEGY

18. WFP RBN defines KM as the continual effort of generating, documenting and sharing knowledge to build capabilities (rather than just capacities) through learning processes geared towards achieving zero hunger. KM in the RBN has three building blocks: People, Processes and Technology.
19. People are at the core of the strategy. The knowledge of staff and consultants is WFP's most important asset and gives WFP a competitive edge in the region. It is through people that this strategy will succeed at being operationalized. KM is everybody's business.
20. The theory of change will guide WFP RBN towards effective KM that is incorporated into day to day activities and enables individuals and team to create, generate, curate, acquire, disseminate, store, access, use and re-use knowledge from internal and external sources.
21. The goal of the strategy is that WFP RBN Values KM by ensuring staff are capable of generating, curating and translating knowledge and evidence that strengthens and improves operations with the aim of supporting the region in ending global hunger, malnutrition and establishing strong partnerships.
22. The strategy is anchored in six workstreams, which define the impact pathways and activities as outlined in the Theory of Change below. The workstreams are:
  - a. Leadership and Governance: Having an Established and sustained management buy in and commitment of integrating KM in all management activities, operational activities and all practices at RB, CO and field levels.
  - b. Knowledge Generation and Use: Systematic use of Knowledge and evidence generated and accrued from the KM approach is routinely used to strengthen the evidence base for effective programmatic action and inform and improve policy and financing.
  - c. Enabling environment: Create and sustain an enabling Knowledge Management Environment that allows for staff to generate new knowledge resources and/or curate existing knowledge into accessible and actionable resources for stakeholders.
  - d. Capacity Building: KM Capacity is mobilised, strengthened and sustained
  - e. Collaboration; Learning and Adaptation: WFP RBNs ability to achieve and sustain its mandate is enhanced through Strategic collaboration, continuous learning, and adaptive management
  - f. Systems and Technologies: in collaboration with TEC/ Digital Transformation unit, develop and maintain foundational infrastructural resources to catalyse KM, including KM processes and tools and strengthen the KM systems to systematically capture, store, and share knowledge and evidence at all levels.
23. The proposed activities will lead to a sequence of outputs that will create a knowledge and evidence base for WFP RBN and its partners, systematically embed KM practices and tools in WFP operations and subsequently ensure that the most relevant knowledge is embedded in operations, and ensure that learning is cyclical, and integrated into how WFP works. Outputs accruing from these activities include:
  - i. KM strategy, Communication plan and Implementation plan developed and implemented
  - ii. Staff and partners KM awareness strengthened;
  - iii. KM FPs appointed in RB and CO level, and network managed;
  - iv. Knowledge products developed and learning events instituted;
  - v. Incentive structure for knowledge sharing put in place;
  - vi. Knowledge and evidence base built, structured, and strengthened;
  - vii. Capacities of KM focal points and staff improved;
  - viii. External knowledge leveraged through partnerships;
  - ix. KM Approaches and tools facilitate organisational learning; and
  - x. Best practices, lessons learned and other knowledge products available and easily accessible through technological platforms.
24. The success of the Regional KM Strategy and its activities will be highly dependent on the below assumptions:
  - a. KM is well instituted;
  - b. A positive KM culture which embraces Sustained commitment to KM agenda at all levels;
  - c. Management buy-in;

- d. There is ease of access to pertinent knowledge;
- e. Staff have capacities Capabilities and competences; and
- f. Adequate resources to support strategy implementation.

25. Risks that could deter the successful implementation of this strategy include:

- a. Reluctance to change by staff;
- b. Management buy-in is not sustained and wanes over time;
- c. KM not being perceived as beneficial to the achievements of WFP RBN/CO goals and strategic objectives;
- d. Inability to identify roadblocks for knowledge sharing and evidence generation; and
- e. Information overload.

26. A detailed implementation plan is available at the Annex 1

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