

Call for Proposals

Analysis of the monitoring and evaluation of knowledge management approaches (IKM Output 3.4A)

Context of the study

Knowledge strategies generally show promise of future potential – rather than conclusive evidence of success towards development efforts. Numerous causes can be identified as to why this is so:

1. The relative novelty of explicit 'knowledge for development' strategies and, because of this, the lack of critical mass/impact evidence for research purposes.
2. The lack of effective conceptual and measurement tools that go beyond output-based or anecdotal evidence, and which succeed in making outcomes plausible beyond a subjective narrative.
3. The elusive and often tacit nature of knowledge makes it very difficult to grasp concrete effect or even direct results from its application, in addition to which, knowledge is often compiled from diverse information sources and therefore the identification of a single source of provenance is in many cases complex if not impossible.
4. The emphasis on control evaluation rather than on learning by NGOs and donors alike (Engel *et al.* 2003) which is problematic when addressing 'impact' of knowledge strategies: quantitative outcomes of qualitative results are difficult to come by or express.
5. The concept of 'impact' – and the indicators for its measurement – needs to be redefined, to allow for the evaluation of knowledge strategies: traditionally, development is understood in the context of economic development, related to concepts of welfare and economic dynamics. (Excerpt from *IKM Working Paper 1*).
6. The role of knowledge strategies in supporting more iterative development processes and more complex and less linear understandings of change

However, if the value of knowledge and knowledge management within development is to be proven, evidence needs to be available. Evaluation and impact assessment instruments should make the value of knowledge more concrete.



Approach to the study and research questions

1. What approaches have been taken to date in the monitoring and evaluation of knowledge management? This will require an overview of the literature. In particular, IKM would like to support non-linear approaches so a particular effort should be made to identify these.
2. How does this compare with M&E of other intangibles, such as information?
3. What are the challenges facing impact assessment (socio-economic) of knowledge management?
4. The key persons in this field will be identified and interviewed to ask the:
 - What are the challenges facing M&E of knowledge management?
 - Which are the most interesting approaches from your perspective?
 - How can we get away from a linear approach to M&E of knowledge management?
5. Developing some key lessons from the existing approaches;
6. Developing an overview of the issues; and
7. Identifying the approaches and lessons which are most relevant to IKM's work, particularly key issues that require further research.

Deliverables

- An *IKM Working Paper* (max. 7000 words) covering approaches to date and drawing conclusions relevant to IKM's further research.
- Discussion of progress and approaches on Working Group 3's blog <http://thegiraffe.wordpress.com>.
- Presentation of review to an IKM meeting, most probably a meeting planned for Southern Africa in 2009.

Contract details

A grant of Euro 10,000 is available to support this work. Proposals are welcome from any source, individual or organizational. The successful candidate(s) will be selected by a team of members of IKM's Working Group 3 which is commissioning this study.

Interaction and peer review

Applicants will liaise with Sarah Cummings (sarah@ikmemergent.net), the Co-ordinator of Working Group 3. It is intended that all programme material is subjected to a critical editorial process to challenge authors as to the clarity and comprehensiveness of their ideas. Authors will be expected to co-operate with this peer review process. In the event of conflict relating to this contract, the IKM Management team will be consulted.

Application and submission deadlines

22 June 2008: deadline for submission of 'expression of interest'. Such an expression of interest should comprise:

- a curriculum vitae of the researcher(s);
- a short motivation (100 words);
- a brief outline (max. 300 words) on the approach to be followed; and
- a list of key references to be consulted.

30 June 2008: identification of researcher

30 September 2008: first draft of the study submitted following IKM style guidelines

30 October 2008: comments from peer reviewer sent to author

15 November 2008: submission of final version of paper

15 December 2008: publication of final version as *IKM Working Paper*

Publication material and copyright

The European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes, EADI (the legal body which hosts the IKM Emergent programme) will hold copyright to the publication which will be published under the Creative Commons 'Attribution, Non-commercial, Share Alike (by-nc-sa) License in OECD countries (<http://www.creativecommons.org.uk/licenses>) and Creative Commons Developing nations License 2.0 (<http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/devnations/2.0/>) for the rest of the world. Contractors/authors will be consulted in the publication process. The initial publication will take the form of an *IKM Working Paper* but co-publication with another development institution would also be possible. After publication as an *IKM Working Paper*, the authors will be welcome to revise for publication in an international journal on the understanding that due acknowledgement will be given.

About IKM Emergent

In April 2007, a five year research programme was approved for funding by the Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS), part of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The programme, Emergent Issues in Information and Knowledge Management (IKM) and International Development, is known as the IKM Emergent Research Programme.

IKM Emergent comprises an evolving group of development researchers and practitioners who network with others:

- To explore the concept of multiple knowledges and its relevance to development policy and practice;
- To undertake research intended to illustrate the relevance of the issues raised by the programme and ways of addressing them;
- To 'curate' and edit our work, and that of others, in order to offer a more holistic and accessible body of knowledge; and
- To identify and respond to opportunities for communicating with development actors and organisations in order to stimulate and learn from innovation in this area.

Key references to be consulted during the study

Julie E. Ferguson, Kingo Mchombu and Sarah Cummings (2008) Management of knowledge for development: meta-review and scoping study. *IKM Working Paper* No. 1, March 2008, 45pp (this includes an overview of relevant literature, also on monitoring and evaluation)

Powell, Mike (2006) Which knowledge? Whose reality? An overview of knowledge used in the development sector. *Development in Practice* 16(6): 518-532

The researcher(s) should also refer to a recent, pre-workshop discussion on KM4Dev www.km4dev.org related to evaluation and impact assessment of knowledge management.

Contact

For further information or to send a proposal, kindly contact:

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