



Complementary Annexes to JIU/REP/2016/10: Knowledge management in the United Nations system

Content:

1. Visual summary
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KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

JIU/REP/2016/10

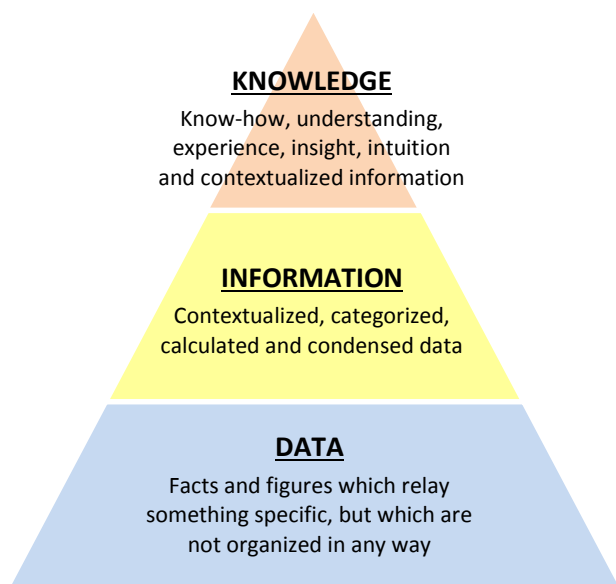
KNOWLEDGE: A STRATEGIC ASSET OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The review of knowledge management in the United Nations system is based on the conviction that knowledge is a valuable core asset of the United Nations system organizations and their best comparative advantage. The effective utilization of knowledge both in the organizations and system-wide is critical for achieving the goals of the system.

For the United Nations, knowledge constitutes an intangible and a concrete asset, an operational

reality and a permanent aspiration, a general and a specific resource.

The United Nations system is the generator and catalyst of a special kind of knowledge — one that is based on values. It is knowledge that makes cooperation possible among Member States — irrespective of their size and location — in so many areas of high complexity and diversity. Knowledge is acquired from lessons learned together with new ideas and concepts.



PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

The main purpose of the review was to identify best practices to be considered, emulated and adapted in accordance with the resources and needs of each organization. The report is a knowledge management exercise in itself as it showcases initiatives and experiences that already exist in the United Nations system.

The Inspector recommends system-wide solutions and proposes new approaches. He also recommends a common definition of knowledge management to be used by all United Nations system organizations and a minimum set of basic guidelines to assist each organization in the development of its own knowledge management strategy.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN THE UN SYSTEM: STILL A WORK IN PROGRESS

As a strategic resource, knowledge requires ongoing continual assessment of its use by means of an effective and productive management in order to ensure that it is optimal. Knowledge management remains a challenge for the United Nations system organizations in their attempt to systematically and efficiently develop, organize, share and integrate knowledge to achieve their cross-cutting goals.

Knowledge management is not yet a strategic priority in all United Nations system organizations and there are no common practices that are accepted or shared system-wide. Nevertheless, some organizations have comprehensive and time-tested practices, and knowledge management is part of their operational reality. Existing knowledge management strategies are continually adjusted and reformulated in the light of lessons learned from their implementation.

A KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PREPAREDNESS FRAMEWORK

- The existence of a strategy and/or policy document and/or guidelines aimed at defining, institutionalizing and operationalizing knowledge management;

- The integration, alignment or programmatic connection of such documents with other strategies and plans of action;
- The explicit attribution of specific knowledge management-related responsibilities and competences to various units, managers and staff members;
- The existence of policies aimed at enhancing the proactive engagement of staff in knowledge management;
- The existence of direct or indirect positive impact on the efficiency of the organization's operations.

THE NEED FOR A **STRATEGIC VISION**

The review found that the main common element of a preparedness framework is the existence of a vision of knowledge management, irrespective of the form in which such vision is expressed. Indeed, some organizations have already adopted knowledge management strategies and, following different paths, have put in place basic elements of knowledge management at the conceptual or operational level.

At present, across the United Nations system, there are enough knowledge management strategies that have stood the test of time and relevance. Those strategies were developed by organizations that have complex institutional structures at headquarters, regional and national levels, and they can inspire or help other organizations in developing their own strategies. The intellectual resources necessary to develop knowledge management strategies exist in all the organizations.



MEASURING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT **IMPACT**

The review was not intended to impose a model, but rather to provide examples and appeal to United Nations system organizations to introduce and implement knowledge management strategies and policies based on existing practices in the United Nations system.



Knowledge management benefits are both far reaching and hard to measure. Knowledge management prevents waste of money, time and human resources and one cannot measure what is prevented. It is difficult to quantify the time spent in, or the cost of, finding the right information or reproducing knowledge that already exists or using obsolete instead of up-to-date information or investing in technology without assessing its potential to improve the availability and accessibility of knowledge.

Overspending money is easily detected, but overspending time is almost neglected. Knowledge management benefits are not achieved directly nor overnight. The prevention of errors and the savings that are often achieved through better use and reuse of existing knowledge are practically invisible in accounting terms.

The risks of not adopting a knowledge management strategy: duplication of efforts and activities by staff working in similar fields; inconsistency in the approaches or understanding of the same policy area; lack of awareness of the whole picture of a particular policy challenge; loss of knowledge and insight when experienced staff leave an organization; insufficient ability to share best practices and innovations; absence of interdepartmental or inter-agency collaborative work; failure to identify loss of time and resources.



REINVENTION OF THE WHEEL

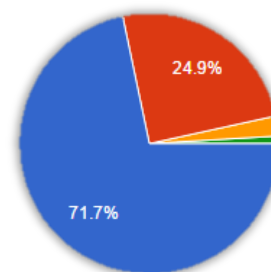
In order to reduce costs, organizations — large and small — need to continuously improve the way they capture, share and deliver their intellectual capital across departments, units, sectors and functions, at headquarters and in the field. Some organizations still seem unable to extract themselves from costly functional silos and, instead, tolerate expensive duplications and reinventions of the wheel. The proliferation of uncoordinated or difficult to access repositories has often had a negative impact on staff's and decision makers' ability to find relevant content quickly as well as on the overall cost of content.

Knowledge management can be a very valuable tool not only for the executive heads of the organizations, but also for the governing bodies. Knowledge management helps to qualify and identify what the organization knows, where and in what form the knowledge is located, how organized is the access to knowledge and what are the best ways to transfer knowledge to the right people at the right time. Knowledge management will help organizations redeploy and reuse existing knowledge assets, solve problems or innovate, foster and develop the right competencies, update and remove obsolete knowledge and ensure that knowledge and competencies are not lost.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT WITHIN **EXISTING RESOURCES**

An underlying assumption of the present report is that knowledge management can be improved within existing resources. Without ignoring the possible need to invest financial resources in knowledge management, the review paid special attention to the role of human resources as the prevailing factor in knowledge management processes. The Inspector believes that there is a latent virtuous circle that can be activated to valorise knowledge and human resources that are currently underutilized in each organization and system-wide.

Efficient management of knowledge does not depend only on technology, but mainly on the human and managerial resources of the organization. Knowledge management is — par excellence — a participative process, in which the personal proactive attitude of knowledge workers is essential.



The survey on staff perception of knowledge management, taken by 6634 respondents, showed that the introduction and implementation of knowledge management strategies and practices had **robust popular support** in the United Nations. Asked if knowledge management was useful: 96,6% of the respondents responded affirmatively.

“MOST OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS CONSIDER THEMSELVES “KNOWLEDGE-BASED” ENTITIES, YET THEY FOCUS ON EXPLICIT AND QUANTIFIABLE KNOWLEDGE ONLY”



The review found that knowledge management would be an important contribution to the implementation of the new holistic and collaborative approach on which the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is based. Indeed, knowledge can break down silos and be the most natural integrative factor system-wide and for all the stakeholders in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The United Nations is not just an honest broker and facilitator for donors and recipients of development assistance. The United Nations is a catalyst and a disseminator of knowledge. Knowledge management can be used as a tool for promoting interdepartmental, system-wide and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN

In view of their overarching goal, the recommendations can be clustered as follows:

- Filling the gaps in knowledge management system-wide, based on existing practices (recommendations 1 and 2);
- Valorising human resources and the knowledge acquired by staff in their organizations (recommendations 3 and 4);
- Stimulating common system-wide initiatives, in general, and in the specific context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (recommendations 5, 6, and 7).



FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 The executive heads should develop knowledge management strategies and policies aligned with the mandate, goals and objectives of their respective organizations.
- 2 The Secretary-General should develop at least a minimum set of knowledge management guidelines for the United Nations Secretariat, based on best practices and experiences.
- 3 The executive heads should take incremental measures aimed at embedding knowledge management skills and knowledge-sharing abilities in their respective staff performance appraisal systems, annual work plans, job descriptions and organizational core competences.
- 4 The executive heads of organizations should establish norms and procedures for the retention and transfer of knowledge from retiring, moving or departing staff.
- 5 The Secretary-General should take measures to optimize the potential of the Knowledge Center for Sustainable Development in Bonn by, inter alia, requesting UNITAR, UNRISD, UNU and UNSSC to jointly design and conduct training programmes on knowledge management adapted to the holistic principles underlying the 2030 Agenda.
- 6 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations with long-standing and comprehensive experience in knowledge management should take the lead in introducing in the agenda of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination an item dedicated to knowledge management.
- 7 The General Assembly should include in its agenda an item or sub-item dedicated to knowledge management in the United Nations system and request that a report be submitted by the Secretary-General, that support the holistic, integrated and collaborative approach of the 2030 Agenda.

«SOFT» RECOMMENDATIONS

Beside formal recommendations, the Inspector made also soft recommendations with a view to:

1. Assigning responsibilities relating to the implementation of knowledge management and the monitoring of the knowledge resources at the corporate level.
2. Recognizing, acknowledging and stimulating knowledge sharing by developing viable moral incentives or symbolic rewards to encourage and acknowledge the knowledge.
3. Empowering the communities of practice in their respective organizations, as a means of stimulating interaction, knowledge sharing and solution searching.
4. Using the knowledge management toolkits produced by other UN system organizations.
5. Encouraging knowledge brokers to migrate to the One UN Knowledge Exchange Network on Yammer, as a potential system-wide collaborative platform.
6. Using the experience acquired by the pioneering organizations in the area of metrics and knowledge management indicators.
7. Promoting knowledge management initiatives and innovative actions taken outside the United Nations system, which can be coalesced in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT RECEIVES THE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AWARD 2017

Knowledge Management Academy (Austria) decided to confer to the Joint Inspection Unit the Knowledge Management Award 2017, for the work done “In the process of inspecting, reviewing, mobilizing and advocating for Knowledge Management in the UN System”.

The Award will be handed over to the project team that produced the report entitled “Knowledge management in the United Nations system” led by Inspector Petru Dumitriu.



“The Column of Knowledge”
by Helmut Margreiter, 2008

Project team: Petru Dumitriu, Inspector; Alexandra Samoulada, Evaluation Officer;
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Leaflet concept and design: Macarena Goytre Rivero

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

ANNEXES

Annexes I-II are published only on the JIU website (www.unjiu.org) together with the report

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Annex I

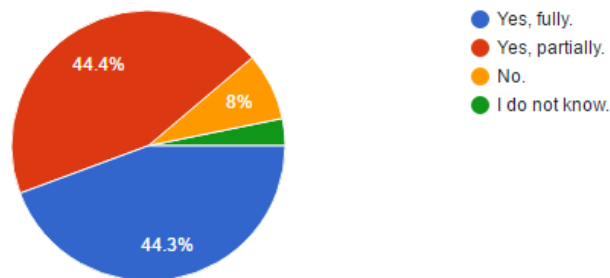
The results of the survey on perception of knowledge management in the United Nations system

1. If knowledge is defined as:

«Specific and valuable information analysed and validated at corporate level, in the exercise of the organization's mandate, which originates in the experience accumulated in that organization and incorporates the organization's values»

Is your organization, in your view, a "knowledge-based organization"?

(6634 responses)

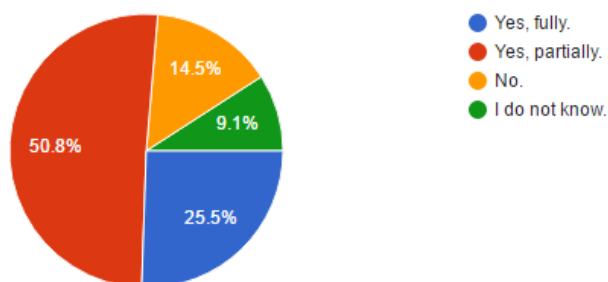


2. If knowledge management is defined as:

«The deliberate and systematic coordination of people, technology, processes and institutionalised structures aiming to add value to the knowledge-based products and operational activities of an organization, through reuse of existing knowledge and innovation»

Are there, in your organization, knowledge management policies of which you are aware?

(6634 responses)

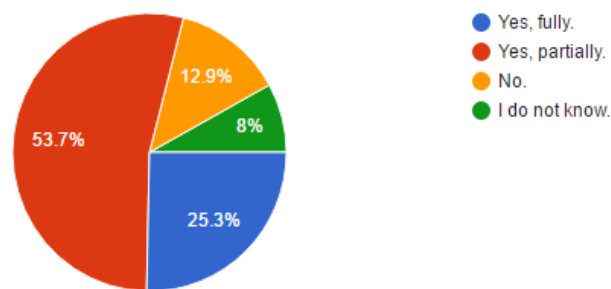


3. If, in practice:

«Knowledge management is achieved through the explicit promotion of creating, sharing, retaining and applying knowledge, as well as through the feeding of lessons learned and best practices into organizational memory»

Are there specific knowledge management practices and actions taken in your organization ?

(6634 responses)

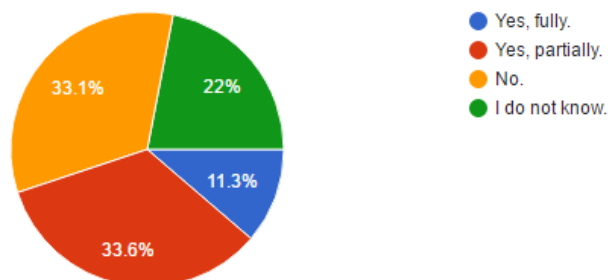


4. If tacit knowledge is defined as:

«Intuitive knowledge deriving from unique personal professional experience, embodied in individuals and difficult to codify into explicit forms»

Are there policies or practices with respect to the retention of tacit knowledge applicable when personnel leaves as a result of separation from, or move within, your organization?

(6634 responses)

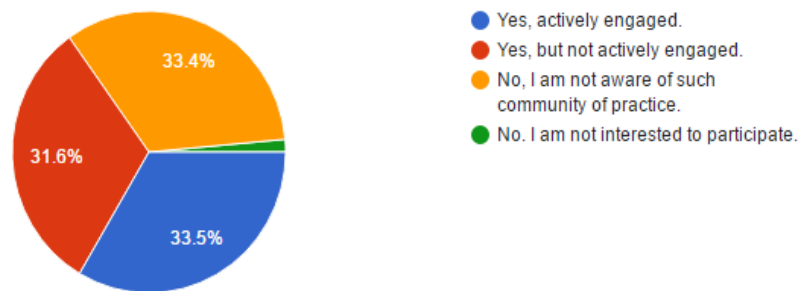


5. If a community of practice is defined as:

«An informal group of professionals who try to face similar or common problems and who strive to improve their performance and the work of their organizations in a collaborative way, by exchanging experiences and ideas and embodying a store of knowledge»

Are you part of such a group, even if not called community of practice?

(6634 responses)

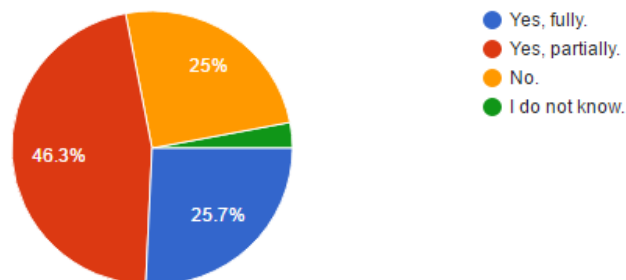


6. If we use the following definition:

«A knowledge-sharing culture is one where knowledge sharing is the norm, not the exception, where people are encouraged to work together, to collaborate and share, and where they are rewarded for doing so»

Is the knowledge-sharing culture promoted and valued in your organization?

(6634 responses)



7. Which one is the prevailing mentality in your organization?

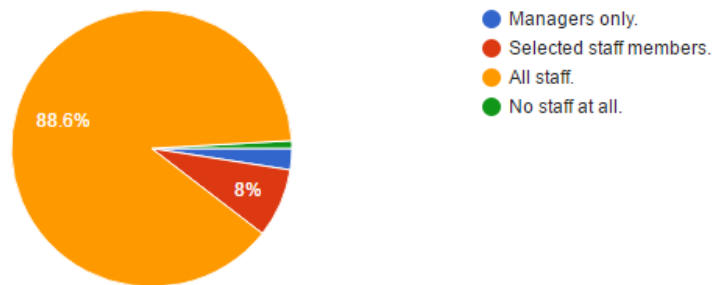
(6634 responses)



8. In your opinion:

The ability to share knowledge should be embedded, when applicable, among the core competences or in the performance appraisal of:

(6634 responses)

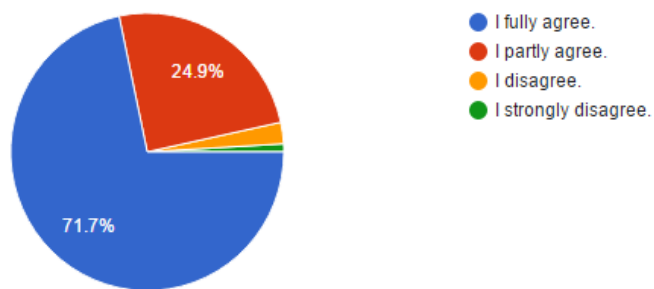


9. If a knowledge management strategy is:

«A policy document that addresses in a comprehensive and coherent way what is the knowledge required by, and available to the organization, how is explicit and tacit knowledge handled, which are the processes, people, products, services, organizational memory, and relationship conducive to efficient organization, creation, classification, dissemination, retention, updating of, and access to knowledge»

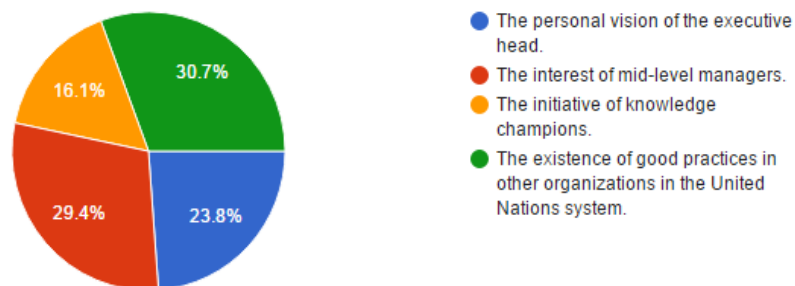
Such a document or set of documents (strategy, strategic plan/objective, policy, guidelines, and/or action plan) is useful for a better management of knowledge as a main asset of the organization.

(6634 responses)



10. What do you think is the most important factor conducive to the promotion of a knowledge management strategy and the introduction or institutionalization of knowledge-management related arrangements?

(6634 responses)



Annex II

Technology platforms and other tools used for knowledge exchange in the United Nations system

Participating Organizations		Intranet	Networking/Dialogue Platforms (internal)	Networking/Dialogue Platforms (external)
1	United Nations	i-seek	<i>(Presented by department below from 1.a – 1.i)</i>	<i>(Presented by department below from 1.a – 1.i)</i>
1.a	OCSS	i-seek	Unite Connections	–
1.b	OICT	i-seek	-Unite Connections -Unite Events	–
1.c	DPA	i-seek	-Communities of Practice	
1.d	DPKO-DFS	Cosmos intranet (SharePoint ¹ based)	-Unite Connections -Cosmos intranet (SharePoint based) -Communities of Practice	–
1.e	OCHA	OCHAnet	–	–
1.f	OHCHR	✓ ²	Intranet (SharePoint based)	HuriTalk
1.g	ECA	✓	-Unite Connections -Intranet -Communities of Practice -NING	- African Virtual Library and Information Network (AVLIN) - Exchange Solution (for African Development Planners and Statistical professionals)
1.h	ECE	✓	-Unite Connections -Intranet -Communities of Practice	–
1.i	ESCAP	i-seek	Unite Connections	–
1.j	ESCWA	✓	-Unite Connections -Intranet	–
2.	ITC	✓	-Project Portal (also events) -Intranet	–

¹ SharePoint is an intranet and team-collaboration platform that can be used in different ways, as well as a document management system and a dialogue platform. Without specific input from the users it is not possible to categorize its use correctly for concrete organizations.

² ✓ is used when the organization has an Intranet though it does not have an own name.

Participating Organizations		Intranet	Networking/Dialogue Platforms (internal)	Networking/Dialogue Platforms (external)
3.	UNDP	(SharePoint Based)	-TEAMWORKS -Yammer platform -WIDE Roster platform -Country Office Service Management Operating System (COSMOS) -SharePoint-based -Programme-area -Knowledge Networks	-TEAMWORKS -Yammer
4.	UNEP	weCollaborate (Confluence based)	weCollaborate (Confluence based) Answer Garden (Confluence based)	UNEP Live Communities of Practice (ELGG and Confluence based)
5.	UNFPA	myUNFPA	-myUNFPA (Intranet) -Google suite (Communities of Practice)	–
6.	UN-Habitat	Habnet	-Habnet -Project Accrual and Accountability System (PAAS)	-Enhanced extranet Habitat University Partnership -Urban Dialogues -Urban Gateway -Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) website (7,000 users)
7.	UNICEF	(SharePoint based)	-Yammer -“Knowledge Exchange Communities” (SharePoint +Yammer single interface platform)	Knowledge Gateway (for some sections)
8.	UNODC	✓	-IBM Notes platforms -Local IT platforms	–
9.	WFP	WFPgo	-WFP Communities -OPWeb (emergency response)	–
10.	UNAIDS	Intranet on Google Sites	Google suite (hangouts, Google+)	Google suite when applicable
11.	UNCTAD	(SharePoint based)	–	–
12.	UNHCR	UNHCRNet (Adobe AEM)	-(SharePoint based) -Yammer -UNHCRNet (Adobe AEM)	-Yammer -UNHCR Exchange (Fuse) -Cluster Websites
13.	UNOPS	✓	Intranet-based Community Sites	–
14.	UNRWA	✓	–	–
15.	UN-Women	-(SharePoint based) -Yammer	Results Management System	-Gender-related campus -EmpowerWomen (Knowledge Gateway) -UN Women Roster of Experts and Trainers (SharePoint based and SiteCore based)

Participating Organizations		Intranet	Networking/Dialogue Platforms (internal)	Networking/Dialogue Platforms (external)
16.	FAO	Workspace	-Workspace -Webinars	-CCComdev -Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition -Pastoralist Knowledge Hub -Family Farming Knowledge Platform -Community of Practice on food loss reduction
17.	IAEA	OASIS (WCM based)	-Agency-wide Meetings System (AwMS) -Correspondence tracking systems (Meeting implementation platforms) -eMeets -TC Prime -SharePoint Team sites	Numerous scientific/ technical Networks (regulatory-, nuclear safety and security, education, control-related, etc.)
18.	ICAO	(SharePoint 2013 based)	-Skype for Business -eMeets	-ICAO Secure Portal (SharePoint)
19.	ILO	✓	-Geneva SDG Expert Group -Asia-Pacific Knowledge - Sharing Platform -Better Work; -Social Protection Platform -ILO Donor Dashboard -Lync	-KM4dev -Swiss KM Think Table
20.	IMO	✓	-(SharePoint based) - Dashboard	–
21.	ITU	✓	Yammer	–
22.	UNESCO	✓	-UNESCOMMUNITY (Drupal based) -UNESTEAMS (SharePoint based)	UNESTEAMS (SharePoint based)
23.	UNIDO	✓	–	Extranet
24.	UNWTO	(SharePoint based)	–	–
25.	UPU	✓	–	–
26.	WHO	✓	Dgroups	Dgroups (online forum: subgroup of KM4dev)
27.	WIPO	✓	Intranet (WIKI based)	–
28.	WMO	WMO Portal	-WMO Portal -Terminology platform for language professionals	–

Description of acronyms, platforms and products (by alphabetical order A-Z including commercial brand names)

A

- **Answer Garden:** Confluence based question and answer platform used by UNEP.

C

- **CCComDev** stands for Collaborative Change Communication which is an initiative aimed at sharing knowledge and increasing learning opportunities and collaboration in the area of communication for rural development. It aims to create a global Community of Practice and strengthen partnerships among a variety of rural actors.
- **COSMOS** is the acronym for the UNDP Country Office Service Management Operating System. COSMOS seeks to track services provided to Country Offices and capture work products and templates as well as feedback and lessons from service engagement that can then be re-used by others within UNDP to improve services over time.
- **Cosmos:** platform jointly managed by the Peacekeeping Information Management Unit (PKIMU) and ICTD.

D

- **Dgroups** This is a sub-group and main communication forum of the KM4Dev network. This group is open to all staff who are interested in KM within UN organizations which can connect with each other through the members list.

F

- The **Family Farming Knowledge Platform** gathers digitized quality information on family farming from all over the world; including national laws and regulations, public policies, best practices, relevant data and statistics, researches, articles and publications. The Platform provides a single access point for international, regional and national information related to family farming issues.

G

- **Google Apps:** Google Docs, Google Sheets and Google Slides are a word processor, a spreadsheet and a presentation program respectively, all part of a free, web-based software office suite offered by Google within its Google Drive service. The suite allows users to create and edit documents online while collaborating with other users in real-time.

The apps are compatible with Microsoft Office file formats. The suite also consists of Google Forms (survey software), Google Drawings (diagramming software) and Google Fusion Tables (database manager; experimental). While Forms and Tables are only available as web applications, Drawings is also available as a Chrome app.

- Google Drive allows storing files in the Google Cloud (which means that files are stored in a remote location and are always safe and accessible thanks to internet). It allows also sharing files, edit documents, spread sheets, and presentations with collaborators.
- Google Forms allows creating professional looking surveys and analyses responses with automatic summaries.

H

- **HABNET** is the name of the UN-Habitat intranet.
- **HuriTalk** is the UN-Wide virtual knowledge network on human rights policy. It connects over 1700 development practitioners from more than 20 UN agencies, funds and programmes.

K

- **KM4Dev** is the acronym for Knowledge Management for Development. Km4Dev is a community of international development practitioners who are interested in knowledge management and knowledge sharing issues and approaches. Their main communication forum is the KM4dev Dgroup.

L

- **Lync** is an old Microsoft product that has been renamed and is available now as **Skype for Business**.

M

- **myUNFPA** is the UNFPA intranet.

N

- **NING Networks:** Ning is an online platform for people and organizations to create custom social networks. Ning offers customers the ability to create a community website with a customized appearance and feel; feature sets such as photos, videos, forums and blogs.

O

- **Office 365** is the brand name Microsoft uses for a group of software and services subscriptions, which together provide productivity software and related services to subscribers. For consumers, the service allows the use of Microsoft Office apps on Windows and OS X, provides storage space on Microsoft's cloud storage service OneDrive, and grants 60 Skype minutes per month. For business users, Office 365 offers plans providing e-mail and social networking services through hosted versions of Exchange Server, Skype for Business Server, SharePoint and Office Online, integration with Yammer, as well as access to the Microsoft Office software.

S

- **SharePoint** is a Microsoft web application platform. It is a web application platform included in the Microsoft Office 365. SharePoint combines various functions which are traditionally separate applications: intranet, extranet, content management, document management, personal cloud, enterprise social networking, enterprise

search, business intelligence, workflow management, web content management, and an enterprise application store. For these features, SharePoint could be particularly useful for working as a team. It is always accessible, and provides a good level of security.

T

- **TEAMWORKS** was an online network created by UNDP as a tool for the sharing and storage of information, knowledge, lessons and experiences learnt by its staff members, staff from other United Nation agencies, consultants, alumni, retirees and trusted partners from all over the world who are invited.

U

- **UNESCOMMUNITY** is the UNESCO Drupal-based internal communication platform
- **UNESTEAMS** is UNESCO SharePoint-based online collaboration and knowledge-sharing platform, designed to enhance the delivery of the Organization's programme and to facilitate collaboration with its partners (intranet and extranet). It provides a variety of shared workspaces for UNESCO's organizational units, Communities of Practice and projects.
- **Unite Connections** is an IBM online platform created to allow UN personnel to collaborate across duty stations and organizations, and even with external partners such as Agencies, Funds and Programmes. A social computing tool which enables the establishment of knowledge hubs and Communities of Practice. It combines a variety of powerful social tools in one comprehensive platform. UN staff can create a profile with a professional background and contact information and this makes it easier to find experts within the Organization.
- **Unite Events** is an IBM online shared platform enabling United Nations entities to create one-click websites for conferences, meetings, workshops, and other events. This platform allows paperless access to events' documents, programmes, maps, multimedia, news and other information relevant to the particular event or conference.

W

- **weCollaborate:** UNEP intranet, Atlassian Confluence based platform.
- **WIDE** is a web-based service platform that enables institutions to build and maintain their own roster(s) of experts. It is part of the WIDE Roster Centre, which belongs to the Global South-South Development Academy (GSSDA), a wider an online, action-oriented service platform that facilitates access to Southern development solutions and Southern expertise for learning and application, supported by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation. The platform allows categorizing skills and expertise areas. Standard e-mail templates that roster managers can customize and adopt to make their regular communications with roster candidates and experts easier and faster.

Y

- **Yammer** is a Microsoft freemium (is provided free of charge, but money is charged for the full version) enterprise social networking service used for private communication within organizations. Access to a Yammer network is determined by a user's Internet domain so that only individuals with approved email addresses may join their respective networks.

