Strategic Evaluation of Knowledge Management (KM) in UNIDO

March 2024

OBJECTIVES
- ASSESS current state of KM in UNIDO
- ADDRESS gaps, challenges and opportunities
- IDENTIFY good practices and success stories
- IMPROVE UNIDO’s KM practices

SCOPE
This formative evaluation assesses UNIDO’s current internal knowledge management initiatives and approaches, identifies gaps and challenges, and explores avenues for improvement.

METHODOLOGY
- DESK REVIEW of documents dated to 2007
- STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS: 48 Vienna & field personnel
- SURVEY to all ~2000 UNIDO personnel: 217 respondents

WEB METRICS and ONLINE DATA
- OBSERVATION OF UNIDO’s ONLINE ENVIRONMENT
- CONTENT INVENTORY

DISTRIBUTION of SURVEY RESPONDENTS (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HQ Staff</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ Consultants</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Staff</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Consultants</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISA holder</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY FINDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
<th>% Strongly agree</th>
<th>% Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to Institutional Sustainability of UNIDO’s KM initiatives and approaches (%)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear, operational and established KM framework (%)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives for UNIDO personnel to use KM (%)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of KM to UNIDO’s results (%)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of KM to UNIDO’s efficiency (%)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SWOT Analysis of UNIDO’s KM System:

**STRENGTHS**

- Knowledge management implicitly embedded in UNIDO’s Medium-term programme framework
- Proven knowledge sharing and learning experience e.g., Knowledge Hub, IAP, Legal Office, etc.
- Technical knowledge and special services, e.g., industrial statistics, detailed technical reports, guidelines, training tools, etc.
- On-going emergence of KM solutions in response to business needs, e.g., Viva Engage

**WEAKNESSES**

- No corporate KM strategy with a clear vision, target architecture, governance, etc.
- No corporate KM Policy framework, guidance, tools, metrics, etc.
- No shared understanding of KM and lack of coordinated approach
- Functional silos prevent teams from taking advantage of each other’s knowledge
- Knowledge is difficult to retrieve, i.e., not shared, documented, and institutionalized
- Loss of knowledge with reassignment of staff to roles in which they have limited knowledge
- Job descriptions, objectives, and performance appraisals do not concretely formalize knowledge management
- Scarce capacities and resources for KM
- Loss of knowledge due to lifetime of many KM ad-hoc initiatives closely linked to Projects

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- Change management can provide new thrust to KM
- Learning and Development Services in Corporate Services and Operations establishing network of KM focal points
- Use of Knowledge and learning platforms could increase impact of UNIDO’s interventions
- Properly managed knowledge platforms could increase UNIDO’s relevance and visibility
- Demand driven approach could increase quality of content and knowledge platforms
- Harmonization of knowledge platforms, learning tools, taxonomy and metadata standards could improve quality and efficiency

**THREATS**

- Knowledge may be perceived as competitive advantage preventing widespread sharing
- Externalization of programme implementation to field consultants may “deskill” technical staff
- Limited KM standards and methodologies
- Scarce resources to support KM and multiple IT systems as a foundational threat to effective knowledge capture, reuse and retention
- Without appropriate quality assurance, lower quality/value of some reports may undermine UNIDO’s position and pose a reputational risk
- Lack of coordination may lead to reduced impact and quality

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. UNIDO should develop a Knowledge Management strategy and set consistent priorities for KM:
   - Assess KM needs of UNIDO personnel.
   - Mainstream KM in job descriptions, annual objectives and appraisal of personnel.
   - Provide KM with adequate leadership and management support, governance structure, staffing capacity, and funding.
   - Clarify the corporate ownership and governance structure of KM, for example, by adding “Knowledge Management” responsibilities to a division or unit.

2. UNIDO should establish a KM policy framework, procedures and guidelines to trigger a knowledge culture:
   - Revive the already initiated Programme Service Modules.
   - Strengthen the support and recognition provided to the Viva Engage networks.
   - Facilitate knowledge sharing and institutionalization across the project cycle.
   - Promote the inclusion of KM across the organization.
   - Streamline and tailor IT systems to enhance end-user acceptance and uptake.