

Knowledge Management TOOLKIT



A practical guide for knowledge management





Resilient Food Systems
Cross Cutting Series | 03

Resilient Food Systems Knowledge Management Toolkit

A practical guide for knowledge management

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Photo Right: RFS Nigeria Country Project
-Training on suitable crops and sustainable agriculture practices

Produced by World Agroforestry (ICRAF)



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About this toolkit

Effective **communication and knowledge management go hand-in-hand and are crucial to development** – whether in the form of dissemination of guidelines or recommendations, advocacy, promotion, press relations, persuasion, education, conversations, roundtables, consultations or dialogue. Sometimes, providing information is the most powerful strategy available.

This **toolkit offers a quick-reference guide** of how to apply **knowledge management (KM)** in the context of the Resilient Food Systems (RFS) Programme to get the information and know-how you need, when you need it, to enhance your country project, as well as effectively spread knowledge in a strategic way to the key audiences you are targeting to achieve project outcomes.



What is Knowledge Management?

Firstly, consider what knowledge is... **think of a great library**. All the information you might need is packed on the shelves. That information will stay on the shelves, quite useless – unless someone acts on it. Once used – by being taken in and understood by a reader, and added to all of the other information and experience that the reader has built up in life – it becomes knowledge.

Knowledge is essential to complete successful sustainability projects; **knowledge management ensures it's translated into action**.

Knowledge management (KM) can help your project collect knowledge and information, organise it, connect others to it, and make it easier for people to use. And if it's easier to use, it can **support learning, create opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange, and promote the goals and impacts of your project**.

KM is the systematic management of an organisation's or, in our case, an initiative's cumulative knowledge and experience, i.e., its knowledge assets. Done well, KM provides the right knowledge to the right person at the right time, so it can be usefully applied.



KM IS ABOUT:



People



Processes



Technology



“Definitions”

Knowledge management (KM): The systematic processes, or range of practices, used by organisations to identify, capture, store, create, update, represent, and distribute knowledge for use, awareness and learning across and beyond the organisation.

Knowledge assets: The accumulated intellectual resources of an organisation in the form of information, ideas, learning, understanding, memory, insights, cognitive and technical skills and capabilities.

Knowledge management systems (KMS): Any kind of IT system that stores and retrieves knowledge, improves collaboration, locates knowledge sources, mines repositories for knowledge, captures and uses knowledge, or in some other way enhances the KM process.

Why use a knowledge management system?

KM helps to:



Encourage programme-wide knowledge sharing, so that our know-how, information, and experience is shared inside and, where applicable, outside the RFS with partners and other stakeholders.



Reduce duplication of effort by mapping who is doing what, and what's working.



Encourage replication and scale up of what works.



Ensure those working in geographically dispersed locations are effectively communicating and coordinating with one another.



Increase project visibility, credibility and influence.



Optimise scarce resources thereby increasing sustainability of service delivery.



Build on successes, avoid mistakes, and reach both short-term project targets and long-term goals.

Do you need a knowledge management strategy?

The answer is yes. The good news is that you are probably already doing knowledge management. But, if you focus on using recognised activities and tools, you can do it even better.

A KM strategy outlines how KM processes take place, and can help your project better implement KM activities. It refers to the entire process of developing and evaluating a KM implementation plan, including continuous adapting and monitoring of the plan to improve a programme's performance.

7 Steps to developing your knowledge management strategy

1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR KM

There needs to be a clear line of information and responsibility:

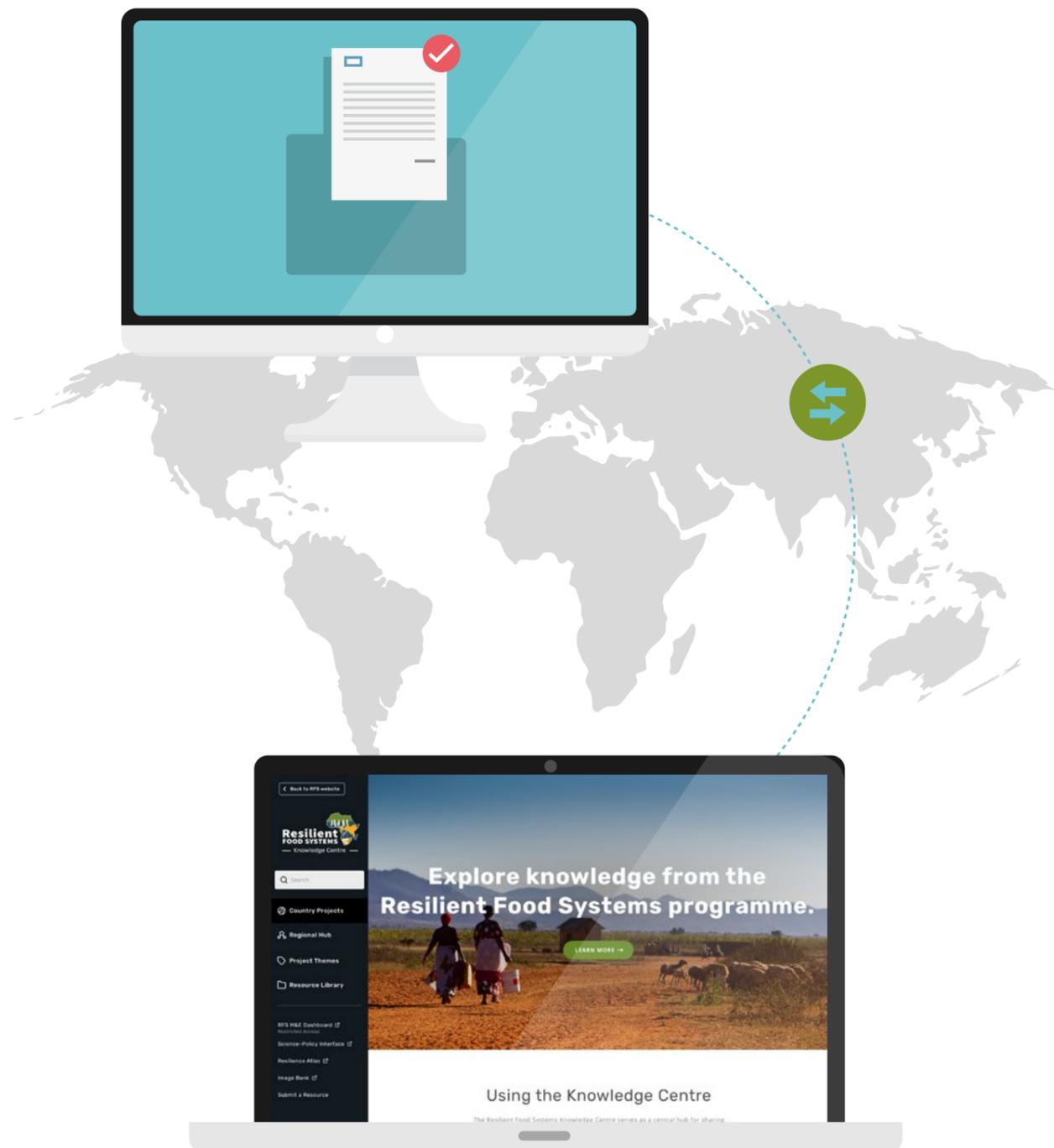


A KM strategy will benefit from an in-house KM champion who is responsible for furthering the processes. He or she works with the project to provide resources, offer support, and encourage people to participate i.e. execute the KM process and activities. Clear expectations should be set that KM is everyone's responsibility.

Everyone should consider: Who else needs to know this? Have I shared this with them? Where should I share it? Where can this be stored so it is easily accessible by others? And should the sharing happen beyond the team, the organisation, or the wider community?

2 KNOWLEDGE DISCOVERY AND INFORMATION GATHERING

The next step in KM is to identify the information and knowledge you already have. This process includes retrieving existing information – like **documents, data and reports, as well as stories from colleagues around project work and processes** – and creating repositories for accessible storage. It's about capturing the experiential knowledge of colleagues and experts throughout the project as well as external stakeholders to populate and **grow a repository of valuable and sharable knowledge assets**.



3 KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION ORGANISATION

As you gather and generate information and knowledge, it needs to be **organised and accessible**. It will need to be **analysed, synthesised, and summarised**. You can categorise your information and knowledge according to the **content type, project areas or even project themes**, for example. This will allow you or anyone else who is looking for information to filter according to what they are looking for.

Technology can play a big role in standardising and organising the KM process. But remember that technology itself is not knowledge management, but simply a tool to enhance your processes (see more on Tools on following pages).



4 UNDERSTANDING THE FLOW OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING

The basis for **KM is knowing what the project knows**, and **how that knowledge flows** throughout the Programme. A concept that is recommended in establishing knowledge is gathering it through conversations. Once people start to tell stories – of what they have done and what happened, what went right and what went wrong i.e. conversations that explore the tacit knowledge – you will start to see the flow.

To create an environment that fosters knowledge sharing and learning, you need to **establish systematic transfer of knowledge and best practices between individuals**. Further, successful teams think carefully about how **knowledge can flow more effectively between them and their external stakeholders** and apply targeted approaches appropriate for each level or audience type – internal, regional and international.



5 DECIDE WHO YOUR KEY AUDIENCE IS

The **audience analysis helps you get to know and understand who your knowledge recipients are**. Try and establish what motivates them and what they value. Your work will likely have relevance to many different audiences, both internal and external to your project.

These audiences may operate within a variety of sectors, levels of governance and geographies. They have a wide range of technical knowledge, experience, and familiarity with your project themes. They may live in different countries and speak different languages. Aim to focus on the most important target audiences e.g. internal and external audiences.



Photo: The M&E workshop provided an opportunity for M&E officers from across the programme to learn new skills and tools, share M&E approaches and collaborate on the identification of shared indicators and targets. ©Loice Abenda, The Nature Conservancy.

6 PACKAGE YOUR INFORMATION FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

Once your captured knowledge has been analysed and edited, it needs to be **transformed into formatted knowledge assets that are of a good quality, standardised and shareable**.

Some of your **KM assets may be focused on external audiences** so using tools like email, event notices and a regular newsletter to disseminate your message would make sense. (See the Communications Toolkit guide.) For **internal audiences**, consider knowledge sharing technology tools that allow for threaded discussions (eg Whatsapp groups), shared documents (e.g. Google Docs) and calendars, and other collaboration features.

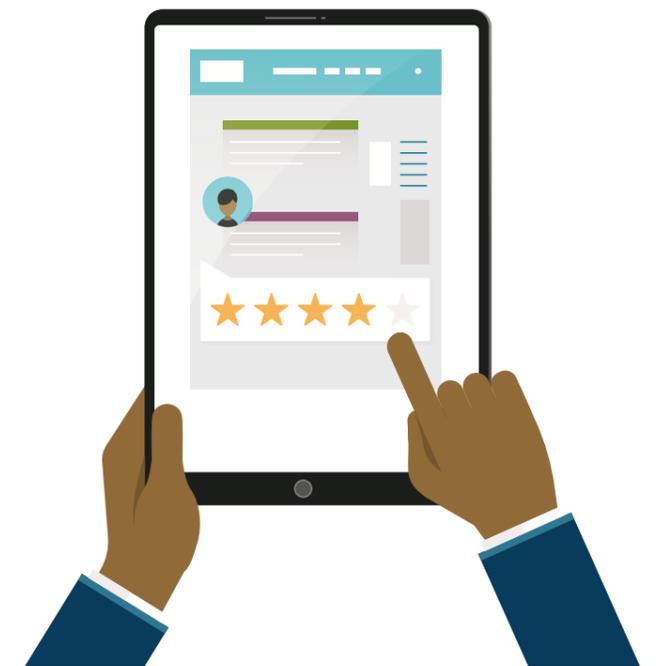
Once knowledge has been gathered and shared, it is possible to apply it in practice on an ongoing basis. This is the stage in which progress is made and innovation takes place. And the process starts all over again.



7 MONITOR AND EVALUATE

Implement knowledge management tools and techniques, monitor their effects, and adapt your approaches and activities to respond to changing needs and realities. An example of this would be adapting in-person training workshops to webinars, in light of COVID-19 restrictions.

Clearly define how you will measure progress towards your KM goals. Just like any project, you won't be able to judge your success without clearly defined goals, indicators and targets. Identify factors that contributed to or hindered your success in meeting your milestones, and use these findings to influence future KM.



Tools and techniques to improve knowledge management

KM tools and techniques can range from activities that focus on collecting knowledge – such as databases and resource centres – to connecting people to that knowledge through, for example, conferences, webinars or social media. They also can focus on **providing knowledge to key audiences** – through press releases and publications, for instance – to enabling audiences to pull the content they need through, for example, search features online.

In other words, some activities will focus on connecting people with information (to share explicit knowledge), and others will focus on connecting people with people (to share tacit knowledge).



So, to generate, capture, and share knowledge, you could think of the approaches as:

- **Asking approaches for eliciting tacit knowledge** – the “know-how” in people’s heads.
- **Telling approaches for conveying knowledge to defined groups of people.**
- **Publishing approaches for sharing explicit knowledge** – knowledge that is in a format that can be easily stored and shared with others.
- **Searching approaches to allow people to pull the information they need, when they need it.**

Taken together, **these different approaches complement each other**, and effective KM strategies will often use multiple approaches. Plus, some specific KM tools and techniques (such as mobile phone apps or storytelling) can straddle different approaches and reach multiple audiences, depending on how they are used.

5 EXAMPLES OF RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS PROGRAMME KNOWLEDGE ASSETS

- 1 South-South Learning exchange visits.
- 2 Relationship-building and linking focal points between the Hub and country projects.
- 3 Knowledge Centre and other multi-stakeholder platforms linked to country projects.
- 4 Learning Labs at annual workshops – face-to-face or virtually.
- 5 SMART M&E platform to monitor progress and indicators across the Hub and country projects.



Tacit knowledge

Tacit knowledge is the knowledge that we have that is garnered from experience and context. It’s personal wisdom and know-how, context-specific, more difficult to extract and codify. It’s the information that, if asked, would be the most difficult to write down, articulate, or present in a tangible form.

For example, what you have picked up through experience working in the position in you are in would be tacit knowledge: how the project runs, effective ways to maintain internal and external relationships, the knowledge you have acquired of the other cultures and countries you are working with as part of a regional initiative.

Explicit knowledge

Explicit knowledge is the most basic form of knowledge and is easy to pass along because it’s written down and accessible. When data is processed, organised, structured, and interpreted, the result is explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is easily articulated, recorded, communicated and stored in, for example, books, documents, reports.

For example, the content in the Knowledge Centre on the RFS website, or the information that goes out in a monthly external newsletter – those are explicit programme knowledge.

Knowledge-sharing tools and activities



Conferences: a more formal meeting of people with a shared interest, typically one that takes place over several days; they comprise a range of speakers - often experts in the field - who discuss a particular topic. Examples: Global Soil Week Conference, Global Science Conference on Global Smart Agriculture.



Expert visits: provide an opportunity for organisations and research groups in developing countries, especially those with limited outside contacts, to establish long-term links with world leaders in sustainability and further build capacity in their countries.



Workshops: meetings at which a group of people engage in intensive discussion and activity on a particular subject or project; similar to seminars, they are much smaller than conferences, and tend to be interactive, educational and more conversational.



Webinars: online learning events aimed at imparting knowledge and skills to a target audience, using voice audio, slides, screen sharing and text chat. It is organised around specific learning objectives which are identified in advance, and which form the basis for relevant webinar content and interaction.



Multi-stakeholder dialogue/consultations: aims to bring relevant stakeholders or those who have a 'stake' in a given issue or project, into contact with one another; the key objective is to enhance levels of trust between the different actors, to share information and institutional knowledge, and to generate solutions and relevant good practices.



Knowledge sharing platforms: where an organisation's staff can interact with each other to share knowledge and contribute formal and informal information to the knowledge base; it allows people to connect with each other for close collaboration and unhindered flow of information among them about research, events, projects and programmes. The RFS Knowledge Centre on the RFS website is an example of this.



Databases: collections of information that are organised so that they can be easily accessed, managed and updated. Computer databases typically contain aggregations of data records or files e.g. you could have a database of relevant media contacts, or events attendees.



Newsletters: distributed by email, they can be used for both internal and external sharing of information and knowledge. RFS sends out a monthly external newsletter to various stakeholders, and an internal monthly bulletin which includes useful resources and upcoming events shared between country projects and the Regional Hub.



Mobile phone apps: the simplest example is Whatsapp - find more tips below about using Whatsapp as a knowledge sharing tool.



Programme websites: the RFS website for example, provides all the audiences with key information needed to understand what the programme is, who is behind it, what the goals are, and where the programme operates; it keeps audiences up to date with the latest news and events that emerge from the programme.



Social media: this content - on Twitter and Facebook - should either be interesting, or useful to your audiences, or one of your audiences; the focus should be on almost real-time engaging with your audience.



Photo: A RFS country project team engaging in a field visit.



Study visit: A study visit involves a team of participants from one country travelling to another country to observe and learn from the implementation of a programme or policy, similarly to the exchange organised between the RFS Uganda and Kenya teams in 2019. Participants get access to knowledge and first-hand experience from the host country on how to overcome a development challenge or implement a solution.



Presentation: this is typically a demonstration, lecture or speech meant to inform, persuade, and motivate for a new idea, new research, new methods. If you or anyone in your team attends a conference or training workshop

he or she could do a report-back to the rest of the team in the form a presentation.



Storytelling: conveying information through stories not only makes your content more interesting to your audience, it makes it much more likely that they will remember it, and possibly even share it; if you are trying to get attention from the media, storytelling techniques are essential.



Brainstorming session: a quick and easy way to generate novel ideas for problem solving and innovation; all the ideas are noted down without criticism and after the brainstorming session the ideas are evaluated. The assumption is that the greater



Photo: During a study visit organized between the RFS Uganda and Kenya projects in 2019, the Uganda delegation joined several field trips and knowledge exchange sessions with experts and beneficiaries of the Upper Tana-Nairobi Water Fund project.

the number of ideas generated, the greater the chance of producing a novel and effective solution.



Buzz group: a method for quickly and efficiently gathering feedback on a topic or responding to a specific question during a workshop, for example. Participants form mini-clusters of two or three people and engage in free discussion, or 'buzz', for a few minutes on a given question.



E-discussion: these take place in a dedicated online discussion space, such as on an organisation's social networking platform (e.g. Yammer); participants go to the discussion space independently to read, contribute their answers, and respond to others by noting points of agreement or difference, sharing significant evidence and raising relevant issues.



After-action reviews: for the continuous improvement of ongoing projects, the review is a

quick reflective exercise for team-based learning, in order to improve results in the current project; the review facilitates team learning from experience; it does not require outside experts.



Interview: an individual expert interview is a focused conversation for capturing knowledge from an 'expert', who may be any person with deep knowledge or relevant experience in a topic/issue of interest; the knowledge gathered is usually disseminated via an article, blog post, or recording of the interview.



Informal survey: an informal survey can act as a primary source of information for understanding the needs, opinions and experiences of a group of staff and partners; monitoring or assessing their views concerning relevant projects/initiatives; and informing future planning. It usually run online using a basic survey tool, like SurveyMonkey.

3

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF WHEN SETTING UP A KM SYSTEM

- 1 What knowledge can be captured from stakeholders, past projects and relevant initiatives at local, country or global levels? How will this be done?
- 2 What plans are proposed for sharing, disseminating and scaling-up results, lessons and experience?
- 3 How will sharing and related outcomes be measured?

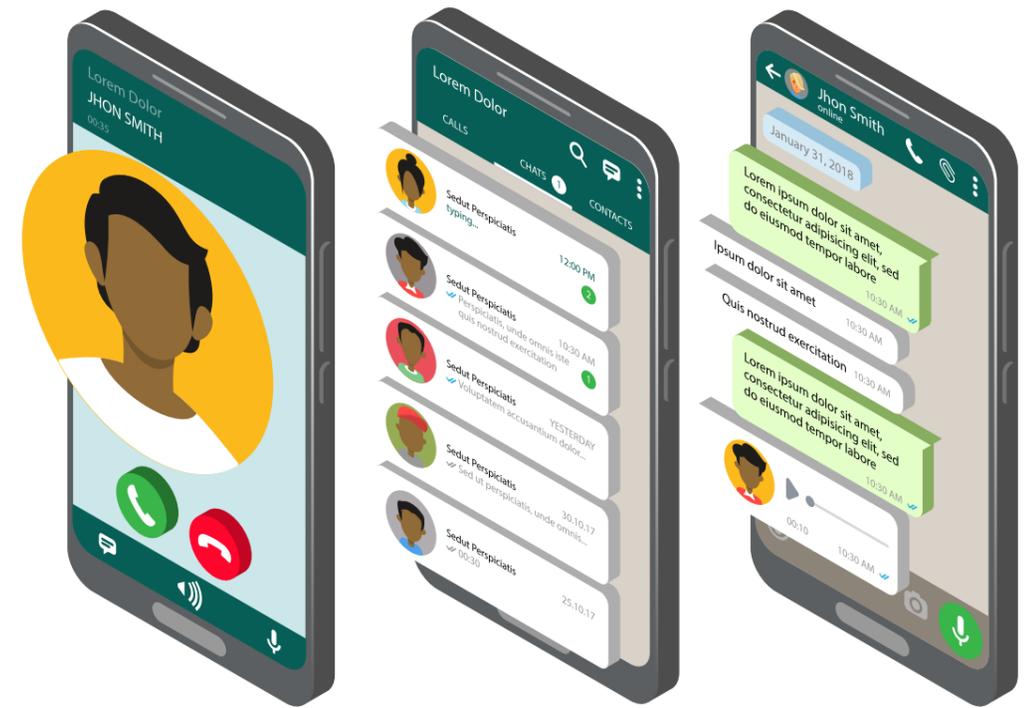
Sharing knowledge within your project team

If you or anyone in your team attends a training workshop or learning session, encourage a feedback session to the rest of the team, or at least share a report-back document. Consider a 1-2 page summary of the session, including key messages and inputs. This kind of knowledge exchange could trigger new ideas on programme progression and scalability too. Right now, it's really important that we share and learn about approaches to new challenges with COVID-19.

And since the pandemic has forced many of us out of our office space and into working from home, how we communicate with each remotely is a consideration too these days.



Photo: RFS Ethiopia team at work.

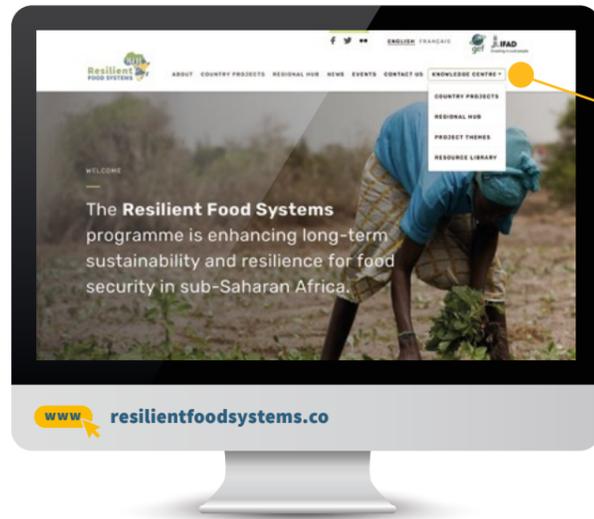


6 WAYS TO USE WHATSAPP WITH YOUR TEAM

- 1 Ensure the whole team has downloaded the app <https://www.whatsapp.com/>, and knows how to use it.
- 2 **Remember, it has capabilities beyond just messaging** - you can share documents and images, and video call up to four people at once.
- 3 **Decide as a group on regular times everyone logs in** - perhaps mid-morning, and mid-afternoon so real-time conversation can take place.
- 4 It's also really important to keep in touch with farmers and field work teams, not only to understand how they are adapting, but also to share important information on safety around the virus and how it's spreading.
- 5 **A good idea for weekly check-in** - perhaps on a Thursday morning - is to ask everyone to message a few lines on:
 - What they worked on last week.
 - Progress they plan to make in the next days.
 - Things blocking their progress.
- 6 **Use Whatsapp for a casual exchange too** - like a virtual tea break for office catch ups and chit chat.

Sharing knowledge with other RFS teams and external audiences

WEBSITE



- About
- Country Projects
- Regional Hub
- News
- Events
- Contact
- Knowledge centre

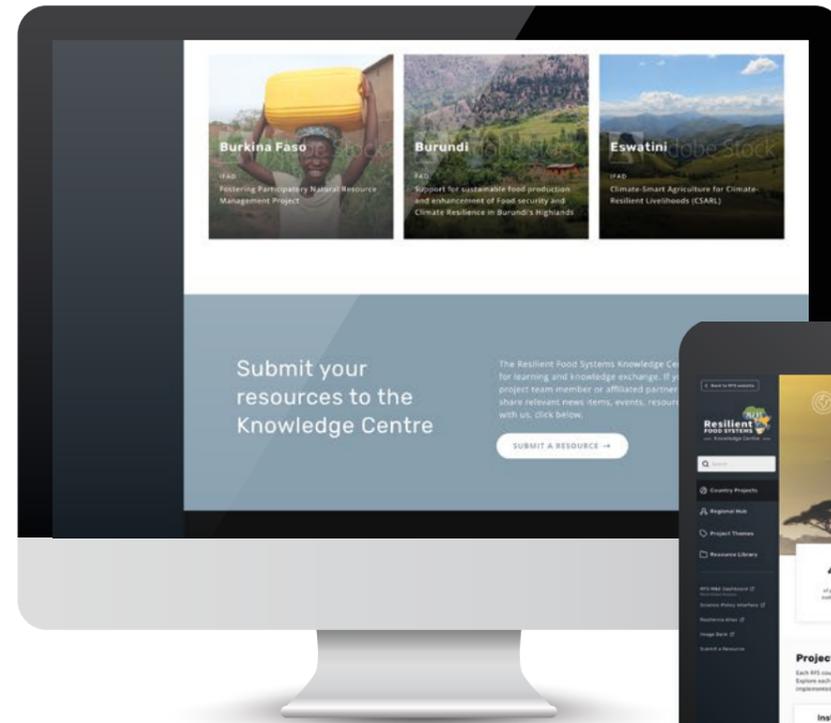
KNOWLEDGE CENTRE



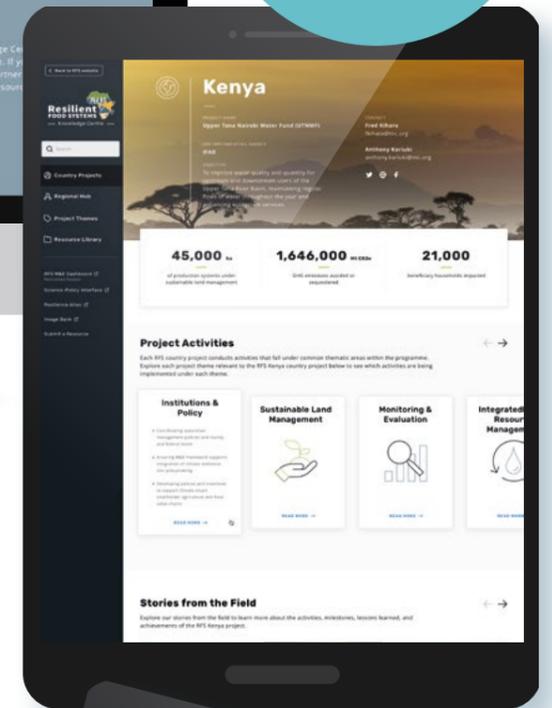
Landing Page

- Country Projects
- Regional Hub
- Project Themes
- Resources and Tools

Linked to the RFS website (www.resilientfoodsystems.co), the RFS Knowledge Centre is the primary platform for KM within the RFS programme – it houses all news stories, resources, and tools generated by the programme. The content within the website is organised by both key **thematic areas, RFS projects and resource types** so that users can see all information relevant to a specific theme or country project all on one page. It also allows all country projects, and practitioners engaged in work related to the RFS objectives, to upload content (new resources, new stories, tools, and multimedia) that can then be shared through the platform and request resources or support.



Functionality to easily add resources to the knowledge centre



Throughout the month, **country project teams are encouraged to share their project updates** with the Regional Hub Communications and Knowledge Management Team in the form of stories, upcoming events, interviews, photos and new resources. These knowledge assets are then captured and translated into content for the website, newsletters, and social media.

This enables you and your project team to regularly reflect up and assess your own project – the activities, learnings, challenges, and information generated that are valuable both within and outside of the programme.



KNOWLEDGE BRIEFS SERIES

Once a topic has been identified for the series, significant effort is made to **gather knowledge and evidence from country project activities**, analyse the information, and package the knowledge in a way that is engaging and valuable. **The RFS Knowledge Briefs are packaged and presented according to the three RFS guiding principles:**

ENGAGE



Engaging stakeholders in promoting collective action and coherent policies. GEF's convening power and catalytic role have been invaluable for engaging countries and mobilising diverse stakeholders to advance the integrated approach;

ACT



Intensifying, diversifying and adapting practices for a large-scale transformation of agro-ecosystems; and

TRACK



Monitoring and assessment to inform decision-making for sustainability and resilience in the agricultural sector.

As well as the 'cross-cutting' themes, such as gender mainstreaming and capacity development.

Examples include the exchange visit between RFS Kenya and Uganda, as well as the documentation of country experiences from applying household resilience monitoring tools in Eswatini and Kenya.



GUIDANCE NOTES



Our Guidance Note series was developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic when it became obvious that our country projects and Regional Hub were going to face many new challenges in the coming months as a result of national lockdowns, social distancing orders, and health threats to both beneficiaries and staff. Guidance Notes were circulated throughout the programme to help guide project staff through the new realities of working and staying safe during COVID-19.

ANNUAL REPORTS

As the flagship publication of the RFS programme, the Annual Report presents a valuable opportunity to expand the reach of our communications, increase our audience, and raise awareness of the issues at the heart of the RFS programme. The launch of the annual report is usually promoted via the RFS newsletters, website, and a social media campaign distributed through RFS and partner channels. The promotion of this publication by GEF, IFAD and other implementing agencies magnifies the reach of the campaign beyond RFS followers and helps introducing the RFS to new audiences around the world.



ADVOCACY EVENTS AND OUTREACH

Tuesday 03/09/2019 (13:00 - 15:00 in MET-India Expo Centre and Mart)

Resilient Food Systems is one of the three integrated the Global Environment Facility. Implementation is led for Agricultural Development, in collaboration with 12 regional partners. The five-year programme is committed and resilience for food security in sub-Saharan Africa, to a paradigm shift in the continent's agriculture, one which of natural capital and ecosystem services to enhance and

The side event will present innovative technologies and smallholder farmers resilience through integrated sustaina

13:00 - 13:05	Introduction and objectives.
13:05 - 13:15	Overview on the Resilient Food large-scale rural transformation in
13.15 - 14:55	Country case studies and in
	Niger Family Farming D
	Profiling water mot approach embed framework. (Presentation inc
	Eswatini Climate - Smart Livelihoods (CSL)
	Monitoring innov Surveillance Fra national capaci chiefdom plann
	Uganda Fostering Sust Security in Kar
	Supporting wom to address lan
14.55 - 15:00	Closing remarks

Resilient FOOD SYSTEMS SIDE EVENT AT UNCCD COP14 NEW DELHI

Fostering an integrated approach for sustainable land management in sub-Saharan Africa

resilientfoodsystems.co

These targeted workshops focus on exchanging experiences and learnings between countries where there is considerable overlap of common challenges or implementation of common approaches. Extending these workshops beyond the geographical scope of the RFS programme helps to expand the reach of the programme and facilitates transboundary impacts and alignment at regional and sub-regional levels.

TRAINING EVENTS AND WEBINARS



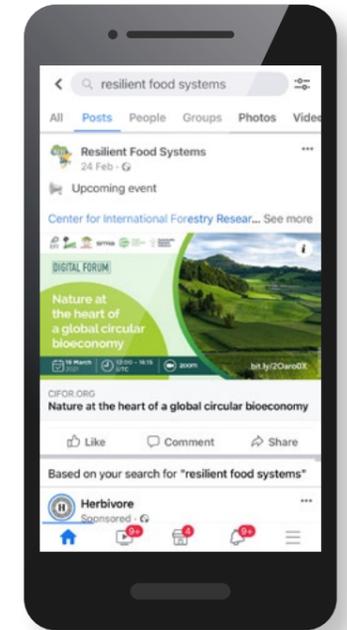
Programme-wide training workshops are attended by all country project teams and work to build and align knowledge and skills across the entire programme. For example, in November 2019, the PCU held a monitoring and evaluation training and alignment workshop in Nairobi to equip project teams with new skills to measure, document,

synthesise, and share the impact of their projects. ICRAF, Conservation International and Bioversity International each held special training sessions on different monitoring and evaluation tools. Country projects also defined specific action plans contributing to the reconciliation of programme-level monitoring.

SOCIAL MEDIA



Social media is a primary channel for spreading key messages from the RFS programme and updating the audience on activities, updates, and achievements. Our focus is on creating engaging content that encourages interaction and action. Social media channels offer an agile platform to respond quickly to audience needs and new information.



INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL NEWSLETTERS

A key mechanism for internal knowledge sharing between projects is the monthly internal bulletins. These are shared across all staff in the country projects and are structured based on 5 key highlights to keep them succinct and easy to read. These include upcoming events, knowledge requests or sharing of project implementation work.

The internal bulletin is complemented by an external newsletter which allows for more indepth stories and events to be shared to a wide circulation list.



Welcome to the Resilient Food Systems (RFS) Newsletter.

This month: Learn more about the upcoming RFS side event at UNCCD COP14, how the RFS Kenya project is using rainwater harvesting to improve smallholder farmer resilience in the Upper Tana River Basin, how the RFS England project is training agricultural extension officers to promote climate smart practices in rice and groundnut value chains, and how RFS Ecuador partnered with MTH to reduce youth unemployment through beekeeping.

New to Resilient Food Systems?

Check out our website and follow us on social media.



Resilient Food Systems Uganda project visits Kenya for a South-South exchange visit

In May 2019, the RFS Uganda team travelled to Kenya in order to see first-hand the technologies and approaches that the Upper Tana Water Fund is implementing to help improve smallholder access to water for irrigation and restore degraded environments.

Resilient FOOD SYSTEMS



www.resilientfoodsystems.co

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ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT



This brief is part of a series of knowledge products prepared by the Regional Hub project of the Resilient Food Systems programme. This brief falls under the **Cross-Cutting** theme, with other knowledge products categorized under the other programme pillars **Engage**, **Act** and **Track**, or within a **Cross-cutting** tag.

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A practical guide for knowledge management



Our programme website allows easy access to these resources.

www.resilientfoodsystems.co

Toolkit

Produced by

World Agroforestry



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