

Managing for Development Results (MfDR)

MfDR tools at Country Programme and Project levels

Knowledge Management for Results Monitoring impact to generate knowledge Technical Note

“How an IFAD Country Programme Team can link the monitoring and evaluation system to knowledge management and contribute to the achievement of better results and impact.”

Taking stock of the Madagascar successful experience in M&E and Knowledge Management and communication activities (SEGS programme – 2007/2009): see www.capfida.mg

I - Background

Development projects generate vast results and impacts in poverty alleviation but these often remain unknown due to lack of knowledge management processes from the grass-roots to international levels. Therefore, there is a need to improve dissemination of the knowledge acquired among all the stakeholders involved at the various stages of the projects and use it effectively towards achieving poverty reduction objectives.

In frequent cases, monitoring of development project activities is very weak and poorly documented. Some projects, however, do attempt to improve monitoring and evaluation and invest in data collection of long lists of indicators, which are rarely analysed. This process requires a significant amount of resources and time, and has so far often revealed insufficient in accelerating capacity-building processes and effectively using experience and knowledge gained from the field. Some work has also been conducted at IFAD headquarters level with the aim of orienting projects towards generating better knowledge management systems (e.g. results and impact management system, impact assessment guidelines, framework for annual workplans and budgets, completion reports). However these systems suffer from a lack of ownership in the field and are often not sufficiently endorsed by the project teams, who usually perceive them as separate requirements to satisfy IFAD and are not integrated into overall country schemes.

Since 2007, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MAEP) of Madagascar and under the Innovation Mainstreaming Initiative (IMI) funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), IFAD Madagascar Country Programme has launched a series of processes and activities aiming at improving the analysis and dissemination of project experiences and lessons through strengthened M&E and KM systems. The latter experience has demonstrated an increase in project management capability and is considered as part of the broader MfDR initiative. The model is now being up-scaled within the new FIDAFRIQUE/IFADAFRICA framework now including the East and South Africa region.

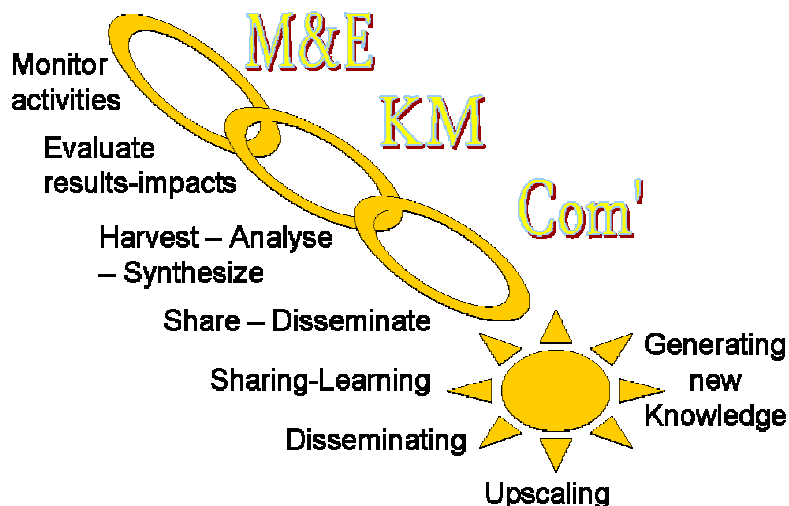
The objective of this technical note is to build on this initiative and provide a basis for reflection on the possibilities for replication and up-scaling in other countries. This note is tailored for country programme managers who are willing to improve project management through improved M&E and KM systems and

the use of simple tools adapted to country context. It highlights some of the basic steps necessary to build a strong knowledge platform at programme level (country programme portal on the web) and to use this knowledge for improving results.

II - General description of the Knowledge Value Chain approach:

As shown in the opposite figure, the approach applies the concept of a value chain to knowledge, where “knowledge” is considered as a “product”. At each stage of the knowledge chain, from generation (“production”) to analysis (“transformation”) and dissemination (“marketing”), appropriate mechanisms (selection of successes and failures from the M&E system, electronic library, case studies) are developed in view of adding value to the knowledge generated in context of project activities and to facilitate its dissemination to a large number of stakeholders.

Figure 1: The Knowledge Value Chain showing the different stages.



Throughout the process, continuous training is provided to project staff in order to enhance their capacities in consolidating grass-root/national data and analysing results. Eventually, new experience-based knowledge is generated and can be used to enrich policy dialogue and to improve design of future projects and programmes.

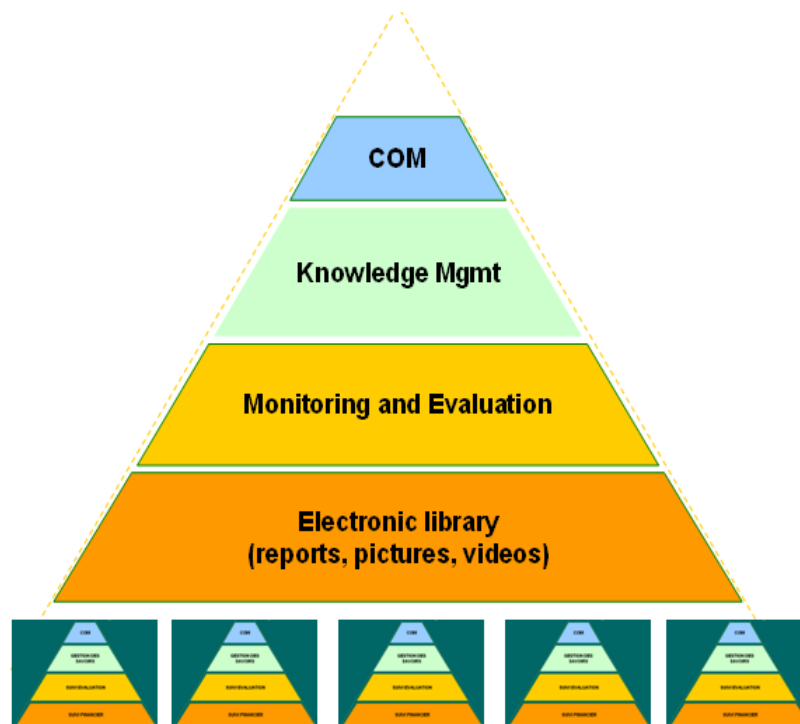
The above process is drawn out in the pyramid below and is used at both the project and country programme levels for the country programme website. Up-scaling the latter from project to regional level allows conducting cross-cutting analysis.

Box 1. The system supports the projects in adopting the logical framework as a result-based management tool, which aggregates a reduced number of indicators easily quantifiable.

Advantages of the approach:

- gathers information directly from the field
- allows the recording of success and failure of a project
- better informs the IFAD corporate systems and flags out the short-comings of a project
- allows crossing of information between financial and results-based measurements
- harmonises information by linking the M&E system and that of the government MAP
- provides a broad perspective and a variety of media products to publicize the project
- provides an arena for the exchange of ideas among various projects
- uses documented experiences to improve policy dialogue and project formulation

Figure 2: The Knowledge Value Chain Approach illustrated as a Pyramid at both project and country programme levels.



III-Main steps of the Pyramid¹

Level 1: Document repository

It is of optimum importance to keep all project documents in a unique electronic library. To achieve this, projects are required to select the most relevant documents produced since formulation and make them available in electronic format on a common platform (database with search engine and key words). Ideally, the documents should be accessible online to all, with the possibility of restricting access (password) to confidential reports. This exercise provides a good opportunity for project staff to organize the large quantity of information available and spot the most relevant ones (usually includes standard project documents such as annual workplans, reports, technical surveys, socio-economic baseline studies, etc.). The e-library can also be used as a source reference for documenting experiences (case studies) and providing data to feed into the M&E system.

The e-library not only contains reports but also pictures and video clips, produced with Open Source internet tools like “picasa” and “youtube”. The repository avails the documents throughout the years and makes them retrievable to allow for cross sharing and adoption among countries and continents.

Level 2: Monitoring and Evaluation

At project level: The M&E system should be based on the logical framework (project or country programme COSOP). The choice of indicators, which often entails long discussions, should be made on a “client oriented” basis (e.g. technical indicators for the project technicians, results and impacts indicators for Government and IFAD, ect.) and indicators should be easily quantifiable.

Each project establishes its M&E manual based on IFAD standards². Then, with technical assistance from the coordination unit and, if necessary, a specialized consultant, each project compiles a list of indicators under the logframe (see box below), and collects data to feed into a standardized database which

¹ These guidelines are not meant to be a “step-by-step” manual and only intend to provide some basic steps necessary for reaching the objectives. Although numbered and following a logic path, the various steps presented here do not need to be implemented in a particular order. More information and manuals available at www.segs-mada.net.

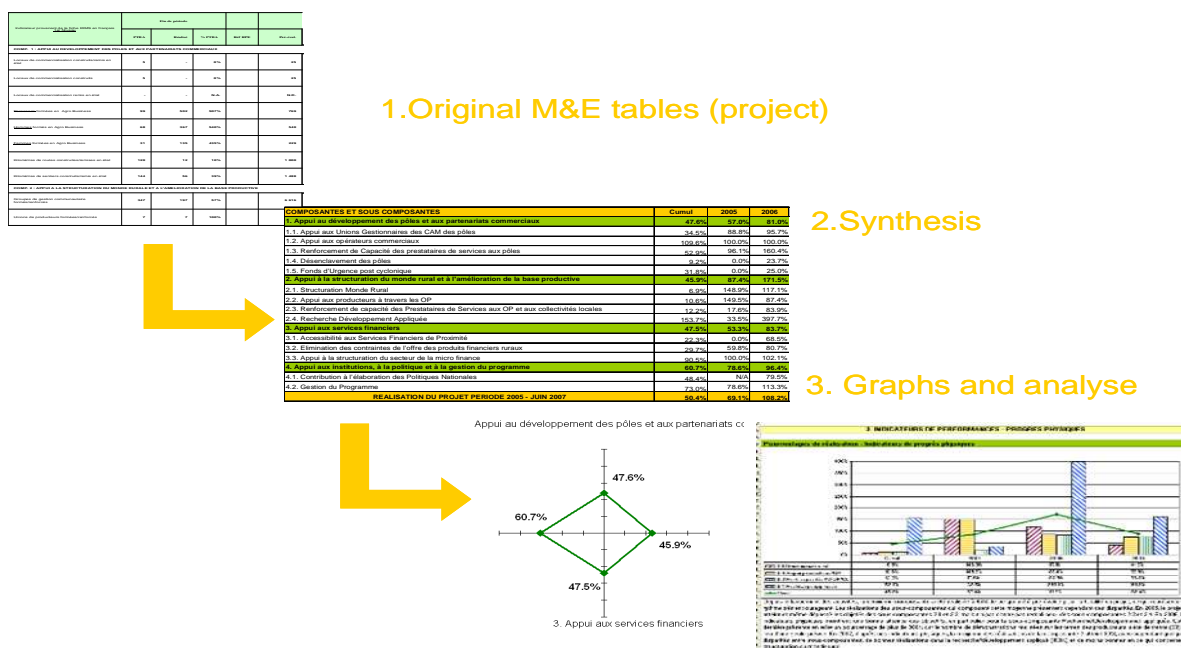
² <http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/guide/index.htm>

provides long term trends and analyses. This database contains all financial and technical data from the project and is organised from detailed tables to synthetic graphs, allowing for crossed analysis (ideally with the possibility to compare physical results with investments made). This can be done through the use of simple software coupled with continuous capacity building of the project staff. In the case of Madagascar, data is first entered in Excel spreadsheets and project staff are trained to upload data in the standardized offline FIDAMADA database. The data is then uploaded on to the online database in the country programme portal.

It is important to constantly encourage the local teams to analyse indicators as soon as the information is collected. This allows the analysis to be made in the exact context prevailing at the time of data collection (hence taking all the available information into account which would otherwise be lost over time) and enable them to gain a more in depth understanding of the progress or hindrance experienced by the project. Quantitative analyses are usually made in the form of graphs and are complemented by qualitative statements within the standardised Excel workbook.

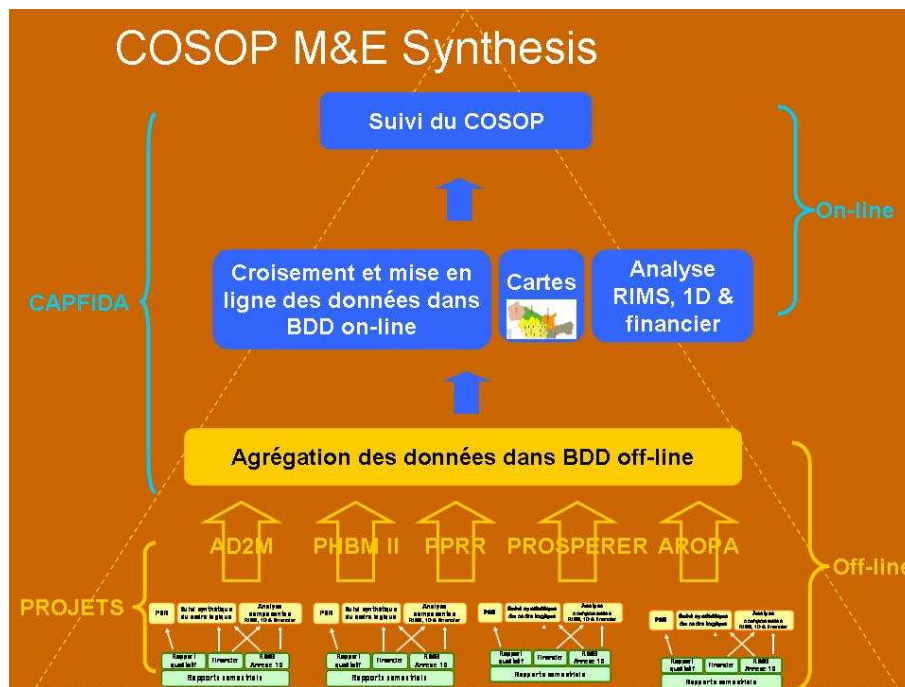
Box 2. Selection of indicators. “The country and development agencies should consult a *short list of key indicators*, preferably from a standardized list, for monitoring progress and assessing the achievement of results. It is important to take into account the *chain of expected results*. In managing for results, the aim is to improve efficiency, *it is therefore essential to be selective and realistic* (in terms of feasibility and cost) when choosing indicators. The results reporting system should remain pragmatic; starting with whatever baseline data is available, including proxies: *use meaningful qualitative indicators to complement quantitative indicators* or to compensate if quantitative indicators are not available; include support for measures to improve data availability and country or project monitoring systems. The end goal should be *a sound results-based management system that includes specific, quantifiable indicators connected to a timeline with baseline data and periodic assessments of project and program performance against defined targets.*” Source: www.mfdr.org.

Figure 3: Flow chart showing the steps taken when analysing indicators



At country programme level: Once the analyses of indicators are completed at project level (both results and impacts on activities and development objectives), these in turn, are aggregated and analysed at country programme level. Project indicators are selected/or aggregated in a way that reflects the global and specific objectives set out in the logical frameworks (top-part of logframes only) and the result framework of the COSOP. The final synthesis is then presented as an annual COSOP monitoring note, including graphs with corresponding qualitative analysis as well as thematic maps (using geographic information systems)³.

Figure 4: Aggregation of project indicators and analysis at Country Programme level (COSOP M&E Note)



Level 3: Knowledge Management

Relevant information is extracted from the database and further analyzed and documented to create user friendly outputs (short articles, maps, graphs, pictures, etc.) showing the evolution of the various activities of the projects, and comparing the actual results with previously defined objectives. Lessons can then be drawn from the successes and failures of each project. Thematic technical papers and case studies are also produced to share knowledge and experiences on specific topics (value chain analysis, monitoring and evaluation system, land tenure agreements, gender impact, etc.) through publication on dedicated websites and international technical forums.

Level 4: Communication

The outputs elaborated by the project team, based on M&E data, highlight the progress made on different activities, and are used when communicating project results in different settings such as regional networks, workshops, project websites, newspapers, media, etc.). It is important to adapt the outputs to the end users: short article for the media, detailed technical analysis for the regional networks, power point presentations for the workshops etc.

³ http://www.capfida.mg/se/site_spip/spip.php?article92

In the country portal website, the “Communication” level of the pyramid is another repository for all communication-related outputs for the country programme and contains press articles as well as important video clips and/or pictures.

Communication through appropriate means is extremely useful especially when helping to raise international awareness of IFAD’s work in the country: the system provides a comprehensive source of information to the IFAD corporate systems as well as project stakeholders and national decision-makers.

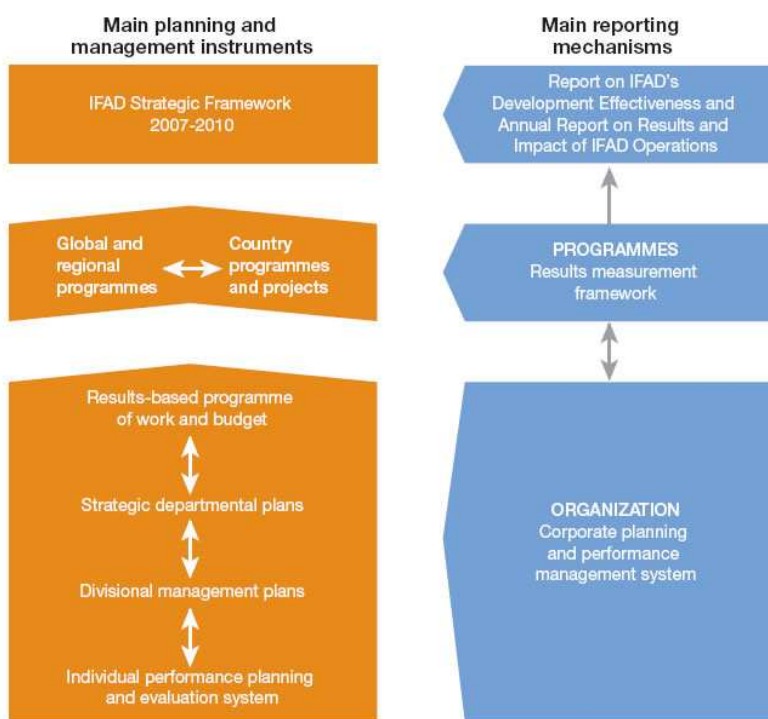
Level 5: Better design and Policy dialogue

The knowledge generated through the above process should serve as a source of inspiration in policy-making and planning. Indeed, this continuous flow of information from the field to the end-users is an excellent tool to improve strategies for poverty reduction and achieve broader MfDR objectives as such data can be traced back to the grass-root level and provide much more accurate information on project status than what would otherwise be obtained through a long analysis.

The system also aims at providing support to the projects in improving their operation frameworks. For example, some analyses can be fed back into the annual project cycle to improve the Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB) by adjusting it to the realities of the field. They can also provide lessons for new project designs.

IV - Managing for Development Results (MfDR)

Figure 5: IFAD’s MfDR system



Managing for development results (MfDR) is a management strategy that focuses on using performance information to improve decision making. It involves using practical tools for strategic planning, risk management, progress monitoring, and outcome evaluation and has been used in IFAD for the past few years. As shown in the table below, the approach implemented in Madagascar can be considered as a field application of the 5 MfDR principles:

MfDR principles ⁴	Madagascar Country Programme
<p>1- Focusing the dialogue on results at all phases of the development process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>At formulation phase:</u> expected results should be defined and their expected impact on poverty reduction and development analyzed. ▪ <u>During implementation:</u> monitoring of the results is needed to assess progress and identify necessary adjustments. ▪ <u>Upon completion:</u> the actual results are assessed against objectives and other factors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The idea behind the approach is to generate new knowledge and added value at every stage of the project to ensure a dynamic flow of information to reach the largest possible number of partners and stakeholders. ▪ Work plans are based on expected results to be achieved in the year. Annual reports should respect the exact framework of the corresponding work plan to allow for comparison where progress or hindrance to the project may easily be deduced.
<p>2- Align actual programming, monitoring, and evaluation activities with the agreed expected results</p> <p>When partner countries and project stakeholders focus on expected results and use associated results indicators, they can better align actual programming (including financial support), monitoring, and evaluation activities with the agreed results objectives. Partner country priorities and constraints must remain the starting point for the planned operations which must be consistent with the country's development strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Madagascar poverty reduction strategy (Madagascar's Action Plan) applies a result's based management approach, where higher level targets, aligned with the MDGs, are disaggregated into underlying objectives with corresponding indicators. ▪ IFAD Results-Based COSOP framework is aligned with the above national objectives and each IFAD-funded project has to report on the in-country identified indicators.
<p>3- Keep the results reporting system as simple, cost-effective, and user-friendly as possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing for results tools (indicators, data collection, analyses and reporting tools) should as much as possible be kept simple. ▪ Rely on country systems, using existing M&E systems and building capacity as much as possible. ▪ Be geared to both learning and accountability functions. ▪ Be harmonized to minimize costs and facilitate comparative analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each project has established its M&E manual. ▪ The tools used for data entry and analysis are basic software such as Excel and Access. ▪ The list of indicators is compiled according to clients' needs (communities, engineers, government, IFAD...). It includes indicators from the national M&E system. ▪ Harmonization is ensured through the use of a single database and coordination by a country office (FIDAMADA and online database). ▪ The synthetic reporting format is standardized (with some space for any other project specific data in the workbook).

⁴ Source: www.mfdr.org

4- Manage for, not by, results

Managing for results involves a change in mindset: Instead of starting-off by looking at the planned inputs and actions and deducing likely outcomes and impacts, the focus is placed on the desired outcomes and impacts first and then identifying needed inputs and actions to achieve them. It also involves establishing baselines and defining targets and indicators for assessing progress during implementation and at programme completion.

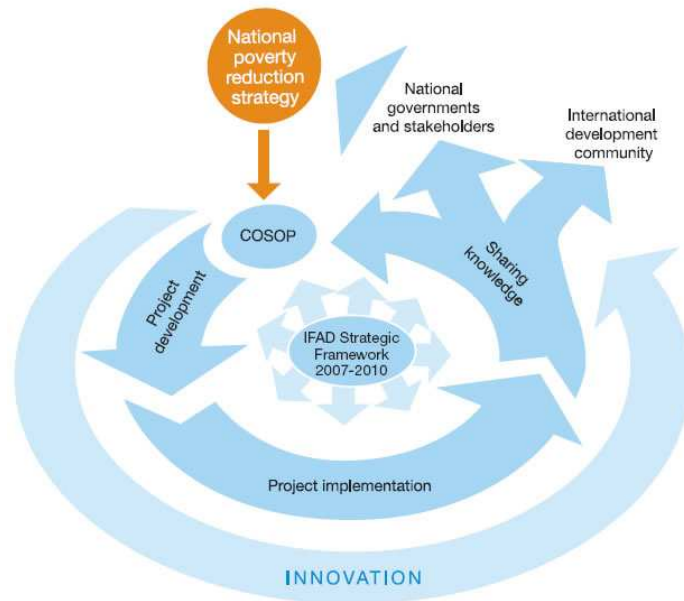
- The result-based COSOP, which defines the priorities for the country programme, focuses on the expected results.
- Inputs and actions are identified during the project formulation phase, based on the COSOP: COSOP's results to which the project under design will contribute are identified and some few simple indicators are defined. These indicators have to be homogenous among projects so as to facilitate their aggregation and comparison at country level. These results will represent the objectives for which all inputs and activities will be planned, enabling the project to plan and adjust the implementation depending on its achievements
- A socio-economic baseline survey is being conducted for PROSPERER and AROPA. Baseline data are available for PPRR and Ad2M.
- Targets and indicators for assessing progress are clearly defined for all the projects.

5- Use results information for management learning and decision making, as well as for reporting and accountability

- Information on results should be made publicly available.
- Results should be used for reporting and accountability (for both partner countries and development agencies).
- Use reports on results in a positive way for management learning and decision-making, taking into account lessons-learned to improve future action.
- Keep in mind that even with a good performance in managing for results, external factors may hinder the achievement of expected outcomes.

- Documents related to each project are available online: reports, data analysis, pictures, news articles etc.
- The initiative was presented in many workshops and seminars (in Madagascar and at IFAD regional and corporate level).

Figure 6: Overview of IFAD's operating model



Box 3. Web 2.0 tools.

- Modern information and communication technology (ICT) instruments can be used to expand the reach of the initiatives, including electronic forums and Web 2.0 tools such as Google Maps, Panoramio, Wikipedia.
- Internet is used both as a repository tool (where all information is made available to everybody at the same time) and a sharing tool (promoting case studies, sharing stories in various networks).

V- Link with other systems

1- Regional networks:

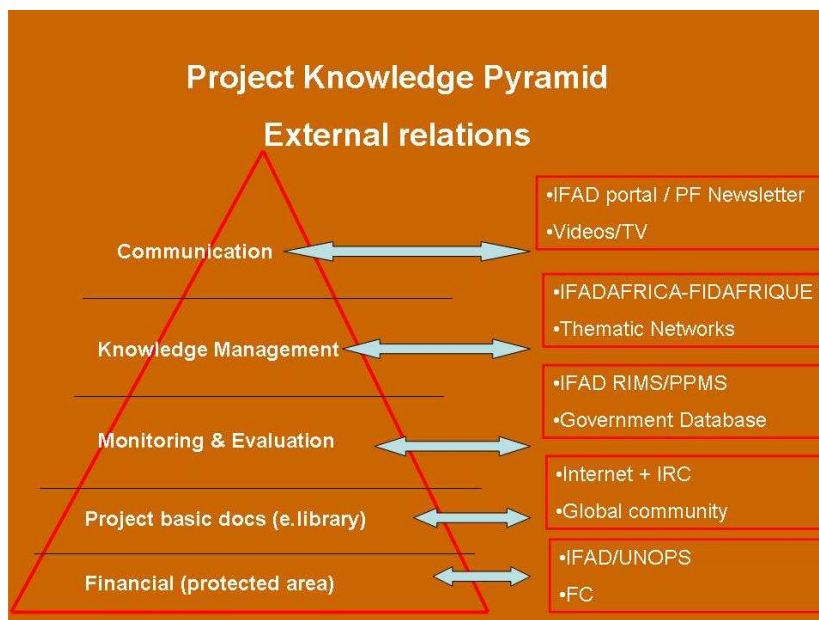
In the case of Madagascar, all project websites and country portal are hosted by the regional network Fidafrigue (www.fidafrigue.net) which can spread the information collected at both regional and international levels. They are then linked to the corporate IFAD website and the rural poverty portal.

Regional networks such as FIDAfrigue are the cornerstones of IFAD KM strategy and offer an excellent opportunity for ensuring visibility for these initiatives. Indeed, they work as a platform that can be used to animate communities of practice, gather knowledge from various projects and programmes all over Africa and communicate with IFAD headquarters. It offers technical assistance in terms of knowledge management, as well as an interactive workspace for small websites, an OpenSource content management system (SPIP) and personalised email systems for all projects. Moreover, FIDAfrigue is a local network, managed in Africa, which facilitates ownership by the projects.

2- IFAD corporate systems

In order to ensure the sustainability of such initiatives, as well as full endorsement by IFAD, it is essential to link it with already existing IFAD corporate systems. This constitutes one of the major upcoming challenges.

Figure 7: The different levels of the Knowledge Management Pyramid linked to the IFAD corporate system



In the case of Madagascar, efforts are being pursued to connect the websites with: (i) the rural poverty portal, which provides information on the poverty context and IFAD activities at country level (www.ruralpovertyportal.org); (ii) the IFAD corporate library (IRC); (iii) PPMS for M&E indicators and results and impact management system (RIMS); and in the medium term with (iv) the new loan and grant administration system (LGS) being developed by the finance department.

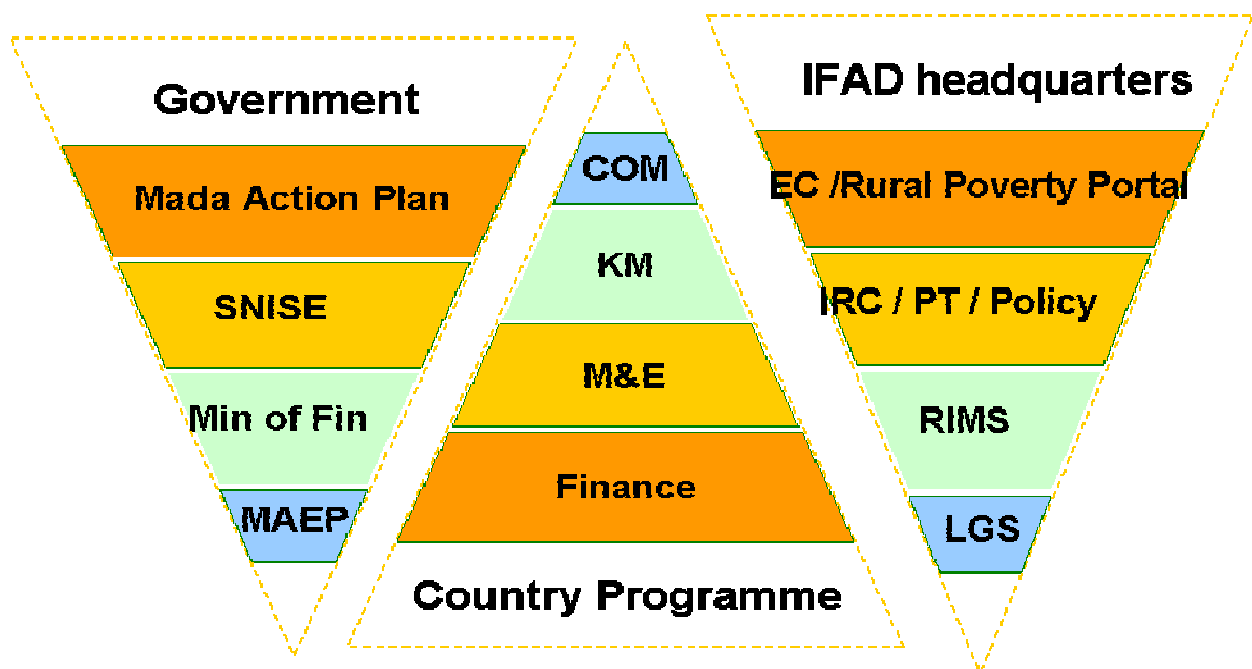
VI- Government systems and ownership

The link with national systems allows for consolidating existing initiatives in each project of the country programme and aggregating them at the Country Programme Support Unit level, providing IFAD and the Government with a solid source of information on M&E, KM and external communication. This will facilitate information mainstreaming within IFAD headquarters as well as within the Government: The system supports the public institutions in strengthening their capacities to monitor and evaluate the IFAD-funded operations and thus fosters the introduction of new result-based practices within the public programmes.

Based on the Madagascar Action Plan, which manages its own national M&E system called SNISE⁵, links are established between the IFAD programme and the Ministry of Agriculture (MAEP) unit in charge of monitoring.

⁵ see MAP progress report, June2008

Figure 8: The Knowledge Management Pyramid linked to IFAD corporate system (right) and Government Monitoring system (left)



IFAD made use of the Country's own Results-Based Management system and IT tools. More importantly, the Government was held accountable to implement this initiative as it was integrated into the MAEP departments⁶.

The country portal as well as project websites are managed locally (identified by .mg) and linked to the government website (Ministry of Agriculture). The country office (known as CAPFIDA) staff is in charge of coordinating all of the M&E systems and centralizing the information and resources, promoting policy dialogue, improving project design and refining IFAD operating model. Capacities of the project's staff are strengthened on website management, M&E, and reporting of results.

VII- Financial aspects

Most of the initiatives described here come at a very low to no extra cost. It is more about organisational change than extra workload since most of the required elements already exist in current processes. Most of the extra cost are related to organizing local workshops, which are needed to harmonise approaches and improve common understanding between project teams and government/IFAD systems.

The following elements may help to reduce costs for the projects (and ensure sustainability):

- Build on local resources such as already existing government systems
- Invest in building capacity on M&E skills within the country team
- Train programme staff in key technical skills (such as the use of OpenSource content management system)
- Use local professionals for finalising the outputs (e.g. journalists for written articles, photographers for pictures, engineers and students for case studies, etc.)

⁶ See article in OECD sourcebook 3rd edition

VIII- Way forward in Madagascar

An impact evaluation of this initiative will be conducted in 2009. The evaluation will help to identify the added value of the initiative to the different stakeholders involved (project management staff, IFAD, Government, and beneficiaries).

Activities set-up by the initiative will be streamlined into the projects where the responsible staff, now adequately equipped, will take over completely. The Knowledge Management Value Chain Approach is generic and can be replicated in other IFAD country programmes. The uptake will mostly depend on senior management decisions and commitment levels of CPMs.

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