Strategy

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT
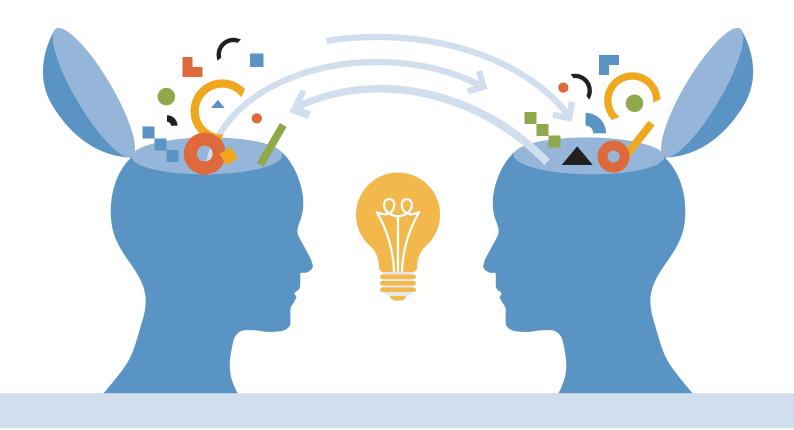
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CoPs	Communities of Practice
HR	Human Resources
KM	Knowledge Management
OL	Organisational Learning
QMS	Quality Management System

GLOSSARY

- A -

Adaptive management

Adaptive management is a process that can improve management practices incrementally by implementing plans in ways that maximize opportunities to learn from experience.

Communities of practice (CoPs)

CoPs are groups sharing knowledge and co-creating new knowledge on a topic of common interest for the achievement of specific purposes.

- D -

Data

In common language, data is mostly used as a numerical description of quantities, qualities, facts, statistics, other basic units of meaning, or simply sequences of symbols that have a defined meaning. Specifically in a technical context, data are often understood as a wider concept that can also include more comprehensive information, like a report. Data are the smallest units of information that can be used as a basis for reflection, reasoning, or discussion.

- E -

Experience capitalisation

Experience capitalisation is a set of measures to learn from experiences and create new knowledge that benefits future operations.

Explicit knowledge

Knowledge that is articulated, codified, stored and readily transmissible to others.

- I -

Information

Information comes from data compiled (articulated or codified) in a meaningful way. Information combined with (human) learning and experience, results in knowledge.

Implicit knowledge

Resides in people's heads (including knowledge derived from experience) but can be converted into explicit knowledge through a process of documentation and capturing (such as experience capitalisation). It is a mix of explicit and tacit knowledge.

- K -

Knowledge

Human or organizational asset, acquired through learning or experience, enabling effective decisions and action in context.

Knowledge culture

Knowledge culture is a set of beliefs, norms, values, assumptions, and routines which determines the effectiveness and efficiency with which knowledge is exploited and used to achieve organizational goals.

Knowledge hubs

Knowledge hubs are technical platforms facilitating the exchange of knowledge by using linkages to external resources, e.g., through APIs (Application Programming Interfaces), which allow the automatic update on information provided by external sources.

Knowledge management

KM is a targeted, systematic, and integrated approach to searching, finding, acquiring, creating, sharing, applying, capturing and managing knowledge to achieve specific goals.

Knowledge procedure

Knowledge procedures are formal procedures that address activities related to KM, like capturing, sharing and onboarding.

Knowledge product and service

A knowledge product is codified knowledge which is designed to be shared with others. Whereas a knowledge product is an object (like a report), a knowledge service is an activity (like a training, workshop or conference). The codified outputs of a knowledge service can then be considered a knowledge product (like a recorded training, workshop report or the proceedings of a conference).

Knowledge skills

Knowledge skills are those skills, which are required to process knowledge, and includes such skills as finding, acquiring, sharing, codifying, reflecting, applying knowledge in its various forms, such as tacit/implicit and explicit knowledge.

- L -

Learning organisation

A learning organisation is an organisation that facilitates the learning processes of its employees, teams and the organisation as a whole and continuously transforms itself.

- M -

Metadata/metainformation

Metadata are a set of data that describes and provides information on other data. For instance, the publication date of a document is a metadata, as it provides information about the document. While "metadata" mostly refers to numerical information, the term "metainformation" is commonly used for any information, including narrative information.

- O -

Organisational agility

Organisational agility refers to rapid, continuous, and systematic adaptation and innovation directed at achieving organisational goals.

Organisational learning

Organisational learning (OL) is the process of advancing knowledge in an organisation through identifying, acquiring, creating, sharing, applying and capturing knowledge. OL thereby overlaps a lot with KM, whereby KM is understood as a more comprehensive approach also including additional aspects of knowledge, like fostering the re-use of knowledge, assuring common practices, onboarding new staff and avoiding the loss of knowledge, sustaining knowledge by archiving, addressing rights of access to knowledge, and protecting knowledge against misuse or damage.

Organisational innovation

Innovation is the process of transforming ideas into new or improved practices or service or processes or structures to advance operations and achieve greater impact. The relationship between KM and innovation is significant, as KM provides the foundation and resources for the creation of innovative solutions to problems and opportunities.

- P -

Persona

A persona is a compilation of characteristics of the user group assumed by an author in the preparation of creating a knowledge product or delivering a knowledge service. The information about the user group (like skills, work context and objectives of the users, experiences, time available for the consumption, and more) shall guide the producer of knowledge products/services to be more user-friendly and applicable.

- T -

Tacit knowledge

(Hard to express) knowledge that resides in people's heads. It is subconsciously understood and applied, difficult to articulate, developed from direct experience and action, and usually surfaced through conversation, storytelling and shared experience.

Taxonomy

A taxonomy can be used to organise and index knowledge (stored as documents, articles, videos, etc.), such as in the form of a library classification system, or a search engine taxonomy, so that users can more easily find the information they are searching for. Most taxonomies are hierarchies and thus have an intrinsic tree structure.

About this document

This document is exclusively reserved for LuxDev and its partners and effectively replaces the 2014 KM strategy. It is aligned with LuxDev's Vision 2030 and other relevant internal policies and constitutes the Agency's KM reference and roadmap for the next three years.

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management, organisational learning and adaptive management have emerged as clear priorities in the international development agenda, as reflected in the organisation for economic cooperation and development of the development aid committee's guiding principles on managing for sustainable development results[1], the multi-donor learning partnership[2] and, at a more practical level, in the increasing number of development actors[3] that are investing in dedicated KM and OL initiatives.

A structured and systematic approach to KM drives improved OL agility and learning and as such plays a crucial role in formulating policies and programmes tailored to the specific needs of partner countries. It helps to take account of rapidly changing local contexts, social and cultural dynamics, as well as the aspirations of local populations. Knowledge of good practice, lessons learned and innovations in the field of development is also essential to avoid duplication of effort and is an important pathway for more effective development.

2. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND ITS ROLE WITHIN LUXDEV

Reflecting these trends, LuxDev has committed itself to the long-term objective of becoming a (better) learning organisation and recognises that KM is critical to improving operational and strategic efficiency and effectiveness. Knowledge is intrinsic to LuxDev's operations and acts as a catalyst for the sustainable development of Luxembourg Cooperation's target countries and regions. Knowledge is simultaneously a resource (e.g., staff competences and experiences are typically a knowledge resource), an output (e.g., knowledge products such as evaluation reports or experience capitalisation notes which convert existing knowledge into new knowledge), and an intended outcome (e.g., leveraging knowledge resources and outputs to produce an outcome such as designing a new project).

LuxDev's Vision 2030 is structured around four axes (support, partnerships, operationalisation, continuous improvement) which ultimately aim to improve development results, specifically in the thematic[4] and cross-cutting[5] priority areas of Luxembourg's general Cooperation strategy - Road to 2030.

---

[1] See Principle 4 - Maximise the use of results information for learning and decision-making and Principle 5 - Foster a culture of results and learning.
[2] https://www.mdlp4dev.org
[3] These include but are not limited to bilateral development agencies (Enabel, GIZ, USAID, SDC), multilateral actors (IFAD, FAO, UNICEF, DG INTPA) and development banks (World Bank, ADB).
[4] 1) Improving access to basic quality social services; 2) Enhancing socio-economic integration of women and youth; 3) Promoting inclusive and sustainable growth; 4) Strengthening inclusive governance.
[5] Human rights, gender equality and equity, environmental sustainability.

The following table shows that the principles of finding, capturing, sharing, creating and managing knowledge are already built into many of the key actions that are (or will be) implemented under each axe.

AXE 1 **Support**	• capacity strengthening, change facilitation and change management to sustainably provide partners with the relevant knowledge (tools, skills and methods) to implement their own policies and strategies
AXE 2 **Partnerships**	• knowledge on partnership facilitation to bring together and develop multi-stakeholder partnerships; • accessing external knowledge and sharing LuxDev's knowledge through partnerships; • developing new knowledge together with partners.
AXE 3 **Operationalisation**	• delivering knowledge products and services to development partners; • capturing knowledge in actionable outputs; e.g. user-friendly lessons learned, knowledge products, evaluation reports; • improving access to effective, real-time and experience-based data, information and knowledge to strengthen ability to adapt programmes based on changing contexts and/or new evidence; • providing technical assistance and expertise in effective knowledge sharing and capturing.
AXE 4 **Continuous improvement**	• ensuring KM is a catalyst for improving operational effectiveness and becoming a (better) learning organisation.

Table: Linking Vision 2030 axes with KM

LuxDev recognises that transforming knowledge into improved development results requires that the Agency systematically:

- capitalises on evidence, data and lessons generated through its projects and programmes;
- develop the capacity of its employees to find, acquire, create, share and use knowledge, skills and experiences, and integrate them into management practices and processes.

The aim is to create a culture of continuous learning within the Agency, where employees are encouraged to think critically, question existing approaches and innovate to improve outcomes.

2.1. Definition of KM and OL for LuxDev

LuxDev defines KM as a targeted, integrated, and systematic approach to finding, acquiring, creating, sharing, using and capturing relevant knowledge to support learning and decision-making. This includes explicit (codified knowledge), tacit and implicit knowledge like experiences, lessons learned, good practices, skills and expertise of LuxDev employees as well as external partners and stakeholders. Tacit, implicit and explicit knowledge are relevant for effective operations and need to be managed. However, the share and complexity of tacit and implicit knowledge is much larger and a systematic approach to KM and OL is needed to surface it and facilitate its circulation to where it is most needed (e.g., projects/programmes).

KM facilitates OL which is the process an organisation follows to adapt to changes and improve itself over time, notably by promoting a culture and practice of continuous learning. The objective of organizational learning is to create a learning organisation, capable of rapidly adapting to changes in context and innovating consistently and effectively in response to development challenges.

2.2.   Why a new KM strategy for LuxDev?

LuxDev's first KM strategy was developed in 2014 and, in the slipstream of later reforms such as Ariane IT, the rollout of LuxDev's change facilitation approach, the recruitment of thematic experts and the launch of an experience capitalisation guide, led to positive changes, including improved technology infrastructure, an increase in the development of knowledge products and the availability of new methodological guidance and technical support. However, an internal assessment carried out by LuxDev's KM unit in 2022 showed that despite these improvements and pockets of good practices, many activities were the result of personal or ad hoc initiatives and not part of a systematic effort to embed KM into core operational and management processes.

LuxDev requires a more focused, systemic and well-resourced approach to KM and OL that can respond to major current internal challenges such as working in fragile contexts (Sahel), the diversification of sectoral or thematic interventions (e.g. private sector engagement, impact and innovative finance, Digital for Development - D4D), the mainstreaming of gender and human rights, environment and climate change, the opening of new partner countries (e.g., Rwanda, Benin, Costa Rica) whilst also taking full advantage of the opportunities offered in a rapidly changing global context, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the expanding amount of data, information and knowledge available on platforms, networks and databases.

A new KM strategy will enable the Agency to fully engage with and adapt to the increasing complexity of cooperation projects and programmes, notably through the promotion of cross-functional collaboration and coordination between LuxDev staff (field and headquarters - HQ) and its wide array of partners, hence ensuring that the Agency remains relevant and agile in an ever-shifting development landscape.

Faced with the obsolescence of the previous KM strategy, the requirements of the Vision 2030 and the emergence of new development challenges and opportunities, LuxDev needs a KM strategy that can avail robust, timely, practical, and implementable knowledge based on evidence and practice to improve performance, make better decisions, and innovate in achieving its development mission.

To further advance KM, LuxDev conducted an external assessment of its KM performance in preparation for the new strategy. The purpose of the assessment was to identify what currently works well, understand major challenges and develop recommendations for the future.
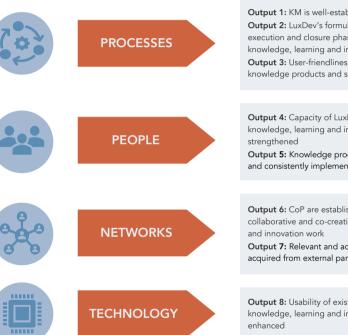
3.   KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT VISION FOR CHANGE

This strategy builds on the work that is already underway at LuxDev, the findings and recommendations of the external KM assessment as well as good practice in the KM for development community. The main objective of the strategy is to connect and transform knowledge into better development outcomes in the thematic and cross-cutting priority areas of Luxembourg's Development Cooperation. It seeks to do so by implementing activities under four key KM input or resource areas (processes, people, networks and technology). These activities should lead to a series of outputs that sustainably improve LuxDev's capacity to capture and use evidence-based and experiential knowledge, transform it into higher quality development projects and enhance the visibility and credibility of the Agency's work.

There is a strong coherence and complementarity across the activities, outputs and outcomes of the KM strategy and action plan:

- **processes -** activities implemented under this KM input area are directly linked with the outputs of embedding KM in the Quality Management System (QMS), integrating knowledge, learning and innovation work into LuxDev's formulation, inception, execution and closure phases and enhancing the usability/applicability of knowledge products and services. These outputs significantly contribute to the achievement of the outcomes "stronger knowledge, learning and innovation culture" and "improved operational effectiveness". Quality, usable knowledge products support but do not alone ensure achievement of "enhanced use of evidence-based and experiential knowledge" and "greater visibility and credibility";

- **people -** activities implemented under this KM input area are directly linked to the outputs of strengthening the capacity of LuxDev staff to deliver knowledge, learning and innovation work and establishing [knowledge procedures](#) to reduce knowledge loss through staff departures or rotations. These outputs are most strongly linked to achieving a "stronger knowledge, learning and innovation culture" but also contribute to "improved operational effectiveness" and "enhanced use of evidence-based and experiential knowledge";
- **networks -** activities implemented under this KM input area are linked to the output on establishing internal CoPs and acquiring relevant and actionable knowledge from external partners and networks. These outputs contribute significantly to all strategic outcomes;
- **technology -** activities implemented under this KM input area are exclusively linked to the IT output focusing on strengthening staff capacity to use existing knowledge tools and improving the searching and filtering of information. This output is directly linked to the outcome "improved operational effectiveness".

The strategy's vision for change clearly demonstrates that LuxDev recognises knowledge, learning, and innovation work as critically important and that staff capacity in these areas must be strengthened. Approaches and tools that support knowledge flows and learning, especially KM friendly virtual platforms combined with demand driven CoPs and effective partnership strategies are expected to lead to efficiency gains by providing faster access to collective knowledge, better knowledge retention and more creative and efficient problem solving.

Figure 1: Vision for change

PROCESSES	**Output 1:** KM is well-established in the QMS **Output 2:** LuxDev's formulation, inception, execution and closure phases are aligned with knowledge, learning and innovation wor **Output 3:** User-friendliness and applicability of knowledge products and services is enhanced	**Outcome 1:** Enhanced use of evidence-based and experiential knowledge **Outcome 2:** Improved operational effectiveness / higher quality of project/programme results **Outcome 3:** Greater visibility and credibility of the Agency in the field of Development Cooperation **Outcome 4:** Stronger knowledge, learning and innovation culture	Knowledge is connected and transformed into better development outcomes
PEOPLE	**Output 4:** Capacity of LuxDev's staff to deliver knowledge, learning and innovation work is strengthened **Output 5:** Knowledge procedures are established and consistently implemented		
NETWORKS	**Output 6:** CoP are established as spaces for collaborative and co-creative knowledge, learning and innovation work **Output 7:** Relevant and actionable knowledge is acquired from external partners and networks		
TECHNOLOGY	**Output 8:** Usability of existing IT tools that serve knowledge, learning and innovation work is enhanced		

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES PER OUTPUT

Several strategic KM outputs have been prioritised to operationalise the KM strategy, including:

3.1. Knowledge management resource area I: processes

3.1.1. Output 1: KM is well-established in the QMS

The strategic objective of this output is to ensure that KM becomes a well-established part of LuxDev's QMS. Relevant knowledge, learning and innovation work is integrated and formalised in management and operational processes, roles and responsibilities defined, and targets agreed. The implementation of the KM strategy and action plan is monitored and evaluated

3.1.2. Output 2: LuxDev's formulation, inception, execution and closure phases are aligned with knowledge, learning and innovation work

The strategic objective of this output is to ensure that knowledge, learning, and innovation activities are integrated in the project/programme lifecycle (e.g., formulation, inception, execution and closure phases) and in so doing, quality is increased, time and delivery costs are reduced, and the knowledge generated by projects as well as its sharing and application in other projects is strengthened. Key activities will focus on improving knowledge capture throughout the project lifecycle (including but not limited to experience capitalisation) and - with the aim of supporting improved evidence-based decision-making - establishing a functional continuum between monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

3.1.3. Output 3: User-friendliness and applicability of knowledge products and services is enhanced

The strategic objective of this output is to strengthen the user-friendliness and applicability of the knowledge products and services delivered to internal and external stakeholders, and thereby improve the performance and visibility of the agency. It's proposed to immediately focus on improving the design of evaluation products whilst in parallel determining which other key LuxDev knowledge products need to be redesigned. The key activity is to prioritise key knowledge products (e.g., according to relevance and frequency of use) and conduct a simple assessment of their user-friendliness. The assessment findings will feed back into knowledge product redesign and the setting up of simple learning strategies/action plans.

Specific target groups with the use of personas shall be defined. In the case that one knowledge product (like a project report) is not adequate to address all relevant target groups, two or more knowledge products can be designed to address needs (e.g., instead of one comprehensive report: one technical report, one knowledge brief, one press release, one blog, etc.).

3.2. Knowledge management resource area II: people

3.2.1. Output 4: Capacity of LuxDev's staff to deliver knowledge, learning and innovation work is strengthened

The strategic objective is to strengthen the capacity of all LuxDev staff in delivering knowledge, learning and innovation work. Whilst LuxDev's Human Resources (HR) department is responsible for developing HR, the KM Strategy focuses specifically on the knowledge skills necessary to implement this KM strategy and for delivering quality knowledge work.

The key activity is to design and implement a regular/ongoing training programme for knowledge workers with short and practical units of 15 minutes up to 1 hour. This "knowledge workout" addresses internal staff, but can also be open to external partners, e.g., beneficiaries or partners in projects and programmes. The training units will be video recorded and can be accessed at any time. The "knowledge workout" is a key catalyst for most of the other outputs of this strategy and therefore should be prioritized.

3.2.2.   Output 5: Knowledge procedures are established and consistently implemented

The strategic objective is to establish and implement efficient and consistent knowledge procedures to reduce the loss of critical knowledge through experts leaving their workplace and hence improve operational sustainability and institutional memory. The key activity is developing easy-to-apply procedures/guides, provide trainings on two core knowledge procedures. The following procedures are prioritised because their consistent and professional implementation across the organisation has a critical impact on success:

- onboarding in the HQ and field offices;
- leaving expert debriefing in the HQ and field offices.

3.3.   Knowledge management resource area III: networks

3.3.1.   Output 6: **Communities of practice** are established as spaces for collaborative and co-creative knowledge, learning and innovation work

The strategic objective is to establish, implement, manage, and continuously facilitate CoPs (sectoral, thematic, functional) to stimulate personal interactions, knowledge sharing (internal and external) and solution finding across the Agency. Formal and professionally facilitated CoPs with clear strategies, adequate resources and strong support will contribute more effectively to organisational goals and outcomes than informal communities.

The CoPs can be established at different levels, including:

- sectoral: local/rural development, employment and employability, governance, health etc.
- thematic and cross-cutting: gender and human rights, environment and climate change, capacity strengthening, inclusive and/or sustainable finance; impact and innovative finance; digital learning; private sector engagement etc.;
- functional: communication, IT, finance (internal), HR, monitoring, evaluation and learning, etc.

3.3.2.   Output 7: Relevant and actionable knowledge is acquired from external partners and networks

The strategic objective is to ensure that the knowledge acquired through an active and systematic participation in external networks and partnerships (including in Luxembourg) is leveraged to achieve clearly defined learning outcomes. Whilst existing knowledge partnerships will be strengthened, new knowledge partnerships will be promoted under the partnership engagement framework to be developed under axe 2 - Partnerships of LuxDev's Vision 2030.

3.4.   Knowledge management resource area IV: technology

3.4.1.   Output 8: Usability of existing IT tools that serve knowledge, learning and innovation work is enhanced

The strategic objective is to have all structural resources and codified knowledge available to perform in operational processes. A key output of structural knowledge resources is the IT infrastructure and equipment as well as the software solutions and the captured contents. Specifically, the current project ARIANE addresses many aspects which are relevant for KM and cover the key needs well. MS 365 is among the tools which will provide multiple benefits to knowledge work. The KM Strategy focuses specifically on capacitating staff in using the functionalities of the newly developed tools in their knowledge work and advancing metadata. Specifically, the given taxonomy should be further developed to benefit various functionalities of the IT-Systems, like an advanced search function and AI-based solutions providing recommendations on people or documents that can be useful according to user profiles.

Finally, a further strategic objective is to identify the potential benefits of using Microsoft's co-pilot (AI) or another adapted AI solution, testing its use in the agency's business operations, and providing an informed recommendation on its future use at LuxDev.